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THE ADEPT OF GALILEE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE INITIATE: Some Impressions of a Great Soul

By HIS PUPIL. 7s. net.

A work of absorbing interest to students of spiritual philosophy and the occult. The author (who is a very well-known Englishman, but who prefers to remain anonymous) maintains that Mahatmas and Masters do not all live in seclusion, nor are they by any means all Indians, but of divers nationalities, English included, and are to be found *by those who know how to seek for them* all the world over. His book presents the veiled history of an Adept who lived and worked among his fellow men until a few years ago, but who elected to hide his true identity for the convincing reasons stated in the book itself—the writer being one of his disciples.

THE ADEPT OF GALILEE

A Story and an Argument

BY

THE AUTHOR OF *THE INITIATE*

LONDON:
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS, LTD.,
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.
1920

68103

This Book is lovingly dedicated to my Friend of many lives,

T. E. J. E.

That joyous, wise and beautiful Soul, who was with the Adept of Galilee in the days of His Ministry.

PREFACE

The Author of the " Adept of Galilee " makes no apology for remaining anonymous, for he not only regards the personal element as insignificant, but even harmful when connected with a story of the following type. That the ethics of anonymity fail to strike all but the very few, and that some people are even tempted to couple anonymity with moral cowardice, the writer is fully aware. Indeed, moral cowardice may, in some instances, be the reason why an author refrains from attaching his name to this or that work. Nevertheless, a moment's reflection will show to many that a higher reason can exist ; for as a little book of aphorisms entitled " The Real Tolerance " not inaptly has it : " He who would selflessly give to the world must give unbeknown to the world "—And why ?—because the reader must always be prejudiced one way or the other by the name, denomination, personality and previous writings of the " giver." And especially is this likely to be the case if those previous writings be entirely along another line of literary or artistic activity, as happens to be so in the present instance. True it is, the author of the following pages certainly does not regard himself in the immodest light of a giver of gifts to the world at large : his not unnatural wish being merely that the fruits of his labours (and they have extended over some fourteen years) may

prove of some spiritual use to a few seekers after certain phases of Truth. In other words, he desires that his book should appeal entirely on its own merits, and he feels that anonymity is the only reliable means to achieve this end. On one point, however, he does think it wise to enlighten his public ; and that point is connected with his nationality ; for he *is* an Englishman, and *not* an Oriental, as some may be inclined to suppose on reading his book.

The following pages seek to draw attention to the ancient and exalted Science of Yoga, as also to interpret the life and works of the immortal Nazarene in the light of that misunderstood, and in many ways occult, Science. That the attempt is not altogether a new one, the author joyfully admits, seeing that both Edward Schuré and Dr. Franz Hartman have already represented Jesus the Christ as a high Initiate of Occult Wisdom. But, unfortunately, both these writers failed to prelude their respective interpretations by any attempt to convince their public as to the rationale of Occult Science itself : an omission which the present author has endeavoured to remedy. Moreover, it may be added, that in the subsequent story, Jesus is represented as a great Adept in Yoga, rather than as an Initiate exclusively trained in the Egyptian Schools of White Magic.

I wish to thank Mrs E. G. Dowling, A.Ph.D., for kind permission to quote from *The Aquarian Gospel*, Mr. S. Hopgood Hart, from *The Gospel of the Holy Twelve*, Mr. J. M. Watkins, from Dr Anna Kingsford's works, Mr Edmond Holmes, from *The Creed of the Christ*, Swami Abhedananda, from *How to be a Yogi*. A'so the Theosophical Publishing Co., Mr Loftus Hare, Messrs Longmans, and the Rev. Todd-Ferrier.

The greater portion of notes, and sources of adaptations, paraphrases, and quotations are to be found in the appendix.

THE ARGUMENT

WAS JESUS A YOGI?

IGNORANCE AND BELIEF

Nothing gives a particular type of person such absolute conviction respecting certain subjects as complete or all but complete ignorance; that conviction taking the form of either a positive denial or a positive assertion. For, to take, as a homely example, the belief in what are loosely termed ghosts, we have on the one hand the 'cock-sureness' (to use an expressive piece of slang) of the school-boy, who, never having investigated the phenomena of Spiritism in any form, flatly denies that such things exist, while on the other, we have another type of person who likewise has never investigated the subject, yet positively asserts that ghosts are a fact, merely because he happens to have been brought up among people who hold that view, and for no other reason. And yet, admitting the correctness of his belief *in toto*, there comes another factor into the matter; namely, the complete incorrectness of all the details pertaining to that belief, for although the statement

may sound paradoxical, yet *what* he believes may be right in itself, but the *way* he believes it may be totally wrong. In other words he asserts with rectitude that ghosts exist, but never having investigated the subject believes them to be the spirits or souls of the departed, whereas every occultist, worthy of the name, knows this to be untrue (1). Or again, he may regard them as supernatural and so again be wide of the mark, seeing that those who are cognisant with the subject have very good reasons for denying that anything supernatural exists in the whole world. Now, as is the case with the instance in point, so is it with beliefs and conviction respecting that great being, who is the subject of this book; namely Jesus of Nazareth. For there are scores of people on the one hand who, utterly ignorant of Biblical Research, the Study of Comparative Religion, Occultism, Transcendental Philosophy, Spiritism, Mysticism, and Theosophy,—all of them subjects which throw a considerable light on the matter—believe and assert that Jesus the Christ was literally and unequivocally the only begotten Son of God, while on the other hand there are numbers of people (calling themselves Agnostics) who, equally ignorant of the subjects enumerated, pronounce him to be a ' mere ' socialist, moralist, and political reformer who, through ignorance and superstition,

(1) The soul or spirit cannot be perceived, but the *astral body* can (which is not the soul or spirit) under certain circumstances. But to call this the soul or spirit is as incorrect as to call the clothes of some person the person himself.

combined with circumstances relative to the growth of myth, came to be regarded as a God. Nor do these latter thinkers omit, of course, to deny that his so-called miracles ever took place, while some of them add that he was a neurasthenic and a megalomaniac, who, in spite of the lofty and very sane morals he preached, ended in the insane delusion that he was the Son of God, or actually God Himself.

THE OCCULTIST'S POINT OF VIEW

Thus we have the two extremes of belief, with the many lives of Jesus constructed on such principles, and ranging from the complete orthodoxy of Canon Farrar to its antithesis 'The Brook Kerith' by Mr George Moore. But there is a third point of view, which, in consequence of many years' study of the Science of Occultism in its highest aspects, as also the great Indian Science of Yoga (or Yog Vidya as it is otherwise called) the present author wishes to put forward, in that he believes it to be the Truth, and one acceptable to such people as will approach it with an open mind. For it seeks to portray Jesus as a great Adept of Occult Science, or in other words, a great Yogi; though the latter designation needs a good deal of explanation, considering the vast number of misconceptions as to the exalted Science of Yoga, as also those who practise it, called Yogis. The object, therefore, of this Introduction is to put forward that explana-

tion as briefly as possible: though we are dealing with a vast subject and can only hope to show the *raison d'etre* of our story, leaving such people in whom we can awaken an interest in it to study the matter further for themselves.

And to begin with we cannot do better than quote extensively from a lecture by Swami Abhedananda delivered in America and printed in a book entitled *How to be a Yogi*: for this lecture clothed in straightforward and simple language is particularly elucidating.

WAS CHRIST A YOGI?

'In considering whether or not Christ was a Yogi we should first understand how spiritual and how divine one must be before one can be called a Yogi. A true Yogi must be pure, chaste, spotless, self-sacrificing, and the absolute master of himself. Humility, unostentatiousness, forgiveness, uprightness, and firmness of purpose must adorn his character. A true Yogi's mind should not be attached to sense-objects nor sense-pleasures. He should be free from egotism, pride, vanity, and earthly ambition. Seeing the ephemeral nature of the phenomenal world, and reflecting upon the misery, suffering, sorrow, and disease with which our earthly existence is beset, he should renounce his attachment to external things, which produce but fleeting sensations of pleasure, and should overcome all that clinging to worldly life which is so strong in ordinary mortals.'

THE UNATTACHMENT OF THE YOGI

'He is not bound by family ties. He does not claim that this is his wife and these are his children (1); but, on the contrary, having realized that each individual soul, being a child of Immortal Bliss, belongs to the Divine Family, he severs all family relations and worldly connections and thus becomes absolutely free. A true Yogi must always preserve his equanimity in the face of the unpleasant as well as of the pleasant experiences of life; and rising above good and evil he should remain undisturbed by the success or failure, the victory or defeat, which may come to him as a result of the actions of his body and mind.

'A true Yogi, again, must have unswerving devotion to the Supreme Spirit, the Almighty and Omniscient Soul of our souls, and realizing that his body and mind are the playground of the omnipotent Cosmic will, he should resign his individual will to the universal, and should be ever ready to work for others, to live for others, and to die for others. All his works, so long as he is in the society of people, should be a free offering to the world for the good of humanity; but at other times he should resort to secluded places and live alone, constantly applying his mind to the highest spiritual wisdom that can be obtained in the state of superconsciousness, through meditation on the oneness of the individual soul with God, the Universal Spirit (2).'

(1) Did not Jesus say: 'Who is my mother and brethren? —Those who do the Will of my Father'.

(2) Jesus said: 'I and my Father are one', just as the Yogi says: 'I am Brahman', or 'I am He'

THE PSYCHIC, PROPHETIC, AND 'MIRACULOUS' POWERS OF THE YOGI

'Again a true Yogi is illumined by the light of Divine Wisdom, therefore nothing remains unknown to him. Time and space cannot limit the knowledge and wisdom of a true Yogi. Past and future events will appear to him like things happening before his eyes. For him the light of divine wisdom has dispelled the darkness of ignorance, which prevents one from realizing the true nature of the soul, and which makes one selfish, wicked and sinful. All psychic and spiritual powers serve him as their real master. Whatever he says is sure to come to pass. He never utters a word in vain. If he says to a distressed or suffering person, "Be thou whole," instantly that person will become whole.'

'The powers of a true Yogi are practically unlimited; there is nothing in the world he cannot do. Indeed, he alone has free access to the storehouse of infinite powers; but he never draws therefrom any force merely to satisfy idle curiosity, or to gratify selfish motives, or to gain wealth and fame (1), or to get any return whatsoever. He does not seek worldly prosperity, and always remains unconcerned about the result of his works. Praise or censure does not disturb the peace of his mind. Bright spirits and the spirits of ancestors rejoice in his company and adore him. Having neither home nor possessions of his own, he wanders

(1) On performing a cure, Jesus admonished the spectators to 'tell no man', nor did he ever ask any form of recompense.

from place to place, realizing that the canopy of heaven is the roof of his world-wide home (1). He is easily pleased by everybody irrespective of his caste, creed, or nationality, and with a loving heart he blesses those who rebuke or curse him. If his body be tortured or cut in pieces, he takes no revenge, but, on the contrary, prays for the welfare of his persecutor. Such is the character of a true Yogi.

'From ancient times there have been many such true Yogis in India and other countries. The descriptions of their lives and deeds are furthermore as wonderful and as authentic as the life and acts of that illustrious Son of Man who preached in Galilee nearly two thousand years ago. The powers and works of this meek, gentle, and self-sacrificing Divine man, who is worshipped throughout Christendom as the ideal Incarnation of God and the Saviour of mankind, have proved that he was a perfect type of one who is called in India a true Yogi.'

THE SIMILARITY OF JESUS' UTTERANCES TO THOSE OF ALL YOGIS

'One peculiarity of the teachings of the great Yogis of India is that the acquirement of spiritual truths and spiritual laws are as universal as the truths and laws of the material world, and that the realization of these truths cannot be confined to

(1) Jesus wandered from place to place. He also said: 'The son of man has nowhere to lay his head'.

any particular time, place, or personality. Consequently by studying the Science of Yoga anyone can easily understand the higher laws and principles, an application of which will explain the mysteries connected with the lives and deeds of saints, or sages, like Krishna, Buddha, or Christ. A genuine seeker after Truth does not limit his study to one particular example, but looks for similar events in the lives of all the great ones, and does not draw any conclusion until he has discovered the universal law which governs them all. For instance, Jesus the Christ said: 'I and my Father are one.' Did He alone say it, or did many others who lived before and after Him and who knew nothing of His sayings, utter similar expressions? Krishna declared: "I am the Absolute Truth." A Mahometan Sufi says: "I am He", while every true Yogi declares: "I am Brahman." So long as we do not understand the principle that underlies such sayings, they seem mysterious (1) to us and we cannot grasp their real meaning; but when we have realized the true nature of the individual soul, and its relation to the universal Spirit, or God, or Father in Heaven, or the Absolute Truth, we have learned the principle, and there is no further mystery about it. We are then sure that whoever reaches this state of spiritual oneness or God-consciousness, will express the same thought in a similar manner. Therefore if we wish to understand the character and "miraculous" deeds of

(1) As also apparently tainted with megalomania, the lecturer might have added.

Jesus of Nazareth, the surest way open to us is the study of the Science of Yoga and the practice of its methods.'

YOGA A RATIONAL SCIENCE

'This Science of Yoga, as has already been stated, explains all mysteries, reveals the causes of all miracles, and describes the laws which govern them. It helps us to unravel the secrets of nature and to discover the origin of such phenomena as are called miraculous. All miracles like "walking on the sea", "feeding a multitude with a small quantity of food", "raising the dead", which we read of in the life of Jesus, are described by the Yogis as manifestations of the powers that are acquired through long practice of Yoga. These powers are not supernatural; on the contrary, they are in nature, are governed by natural though higher laws, and are therefore universal. When these laws are understood, that which is ordinarily called miraculous by ignorant people, appears to be the natural result of finer forces working on a higher plane. There is no such thing as the absolutely supernatural.'

THE 'MIRACLES' OF PRE-CHRISTIAN YOGIS SIMILAR TO CHRIST'S

'Those who have ready the gospel of Buddha by Paul Carus, will remember that, five hundred years before the birth of Jesus the Christ, Shâriputra, Buddha's illustrious disciple, walked on the surface

of the water across a mighty river named Shravâsti. A similar account of crossing a wide river by walking on the water, we find in the life of Padmapâda, the disciple of Sankarâchârya, the best exponent of the Vedanta philosophy, who lived about 600 A.D.' . . . .

THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE LAW

'There are other instances of similar powers shown by great Yogis who came later; and these accounts are in every way as historical and as authentic as those of Jesus the Christ. Thus we see that all the miracles performed by Jesus are to be found as well in the lives of Hindu Yogis, who lived both before and after Him.

'So long as an event is isolated it appears supernatural and miraculous, but if we see the same thing happening elsewhere under similar conditions it assumes the aspect of a natural occurrence governed by natural law, and then comes a proper solution of the mystery as well as the rational explanation of that which was called a miracle. It is in this that the Science of Yoga renders especial service to the world, for more than any science it helps to reveal the secrets of nature and to explain the causes of all miraculous deeds.'

THE HIDDEN LAWS OF NATURE

'A true Yogi goes to the source of all power and of all forces, studies the laws behind them, and learns the method of controlling them. He knows

that the various forces of nature are but expressions of one universal, living, intelligent energy, which is called in Sanscrit " Prâna." He sees that all the forces of physical nature, like heat, gravitation, electricity, as also all mental forces such as mind, intellect, thought, are nothing but the manifestations of that one living self-existent force, " Prâna ". This intelligent energy projects from its bosom innumerable suns, moons, stars, and planets into physical space. It has hurled this earth from the molten furnace of the sun, it has cooled it, bathed it in air and water, and clothed it with vegetable and animal life ; it wings the atmosphere with clouds and spans the planet with rivers, it takes a fine minute substance and transforms it into something huge and gross ; it moves the body, gives life and motion to every atom and molecule, and at the same time manifests itself as thought and intellect.'

' Why should it be impossible for one who has realized his oneness with this fountain-head of all power, who has learned the method of controlling all phenomena by comprehending the laws which govern them, and who has become the master of the world as was Jesus the Christ, to perform simple (?) phenomena like walking on the sea, or turning water into wine ? According to a true Yogi these acts of Jesus the Christ were only a few expressions of the Yoga powers which have been exercised over and over again by the Yogis in India. Thus we understand that Christ was one of these great Yogis born in a Semitic family '

THE YOGIC POWER OF SEPARATING CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE BODY

'Like the great Râja Yogis in India, Jesus knew the secret of separating His soul from His physical shell, and He showed this at the time of His crucifixion, by saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It is quite an unusual event to see one imploring forgiveness for his persecutors while dying on the cross, but from a Yogi's point of view it is both possible and natural. Râmakrishna, the greatest Yogi of the nineteenth century, whose life and sayings have been written by Max Müller, was once asked: "How could Jesus pray for His persecutors when He was in agony on the cross"? Râmakrishna answered by an illustration: "When the shell of an ordinary green cocoanut is pierced through, the nail enters the kernel of the nut too: But in the case of the dry nut the kernel becomes separate from the shell, and so when the shell is pierced, the kernel is not touched. Jesus was like the dry nut, *i.e.*, His inner soul was separate from His physical shell, and consequently the sufferings of the body did not affect Him." Therefore He could pray for the forgiveness of his persecutors even when His body was suffering; and all true Yogis are able to do the same. There have been many instances of Yogis whose bodies have been cut in pieces, but their souls never for a moment lost that peace and equanimity which enabled Jesus to forgive and bless his persecutors. By this, Christ proved that, like other

Yogis, His soul was completely emancipated from the bondage of the body and of the feelings. Therefore Christ was a Yogi.' (1)

THE SCIENCE OF YOGA NOT CONFINED TO INDIA

But it will immediately be asked, how did Jesus come to learn Yog Vidya when there is no evidence of the fact that he ever visited India? And here we are confronted with that absence of knowledge concerning research on the subject, beyond the narratives to be found in the New Testament; for, as we shall see later, although it matters not whether He went to India or no, yet there are two documents set before the public (out of a goodly number) which state this to be the case. And the first is *The Gospel of the Holy Twelve*, which purports to be 'one of the most ancient and complete of early Christian fragments preserved in a monastery of Buddhist Monks in Thibet, where it was hidden by some of the Essene community for safety from the hands of corrupters', while another is the *Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*, discovered also in a monastery, by a Russian, named Notovitch (2), while travelling in India. Nor does the latter omit to state that Jesus was taught to read the Vedas and to heal diseases, as also to control 'spirits'. And yet, even if we discredit these two testimonies, there remains the undeniable fact that the Science

(1) Published by the Vedanta Society, New York.
(2) Although this has been discredited by some people I mention it nevertheless for what it is worth.

of Yoga was not confined to India and Indians, but spread in one form or another over a large area of the world; though it was guarded with great secrecy and only imparted to those possessed of very special qualifications. Certainly it was known to exist in Egypt, and as the New Testament writers are silent respecting the doings and whereabouts of Jesus from His 12th to His 30th years of age, it is more than probable, taking everything into account, that He journeyed in search of knowledge and having passed His final initiation at about the age of 30, returned in order to undertake His great mission in Palestine.

THE MISCONCEPTIONS CONCERNING YOGIS

Now until that great Hindu orator Swami Vivekananda came to the western world some twenty years ago, the occidental idea of a Yogi was a man who tortured his body by holding his hand in the air until it withered, or else performed disgusting physical feats for some pecuniary recompense to such people as were willing to witness them. But the fact is, that although such men may call themselves Yogis, and are even regarded as such by an ignorant populace, yet they have as little right to the title, as a man who goes to Church on Sunday, while he cheats and robs and hates his neighbour every other day in the week, has a right to call himself a Christian. For just as a Christian is alone he who follows as best as he can the precepts of Christ, so a true Yogi is he who practises Yoga

in accordance with the principles of that Science. Now it is particularly stated in one of the greatest works on the subject that he who in any way tortures his body cannot become a Yogi; so that such practices are no more genuine Yoga than the self-inflicted torture of many medieval Christian saints was genuine Christianity. Indeed there is not a word in the Gospels admonishing human beings to lie on a board for a whole life-time, until as a result they are buried in filth and sores, yet nevertheless, one of the most popular Saints of Italy is known to have done this, as a means to salvation.

That misconceptions should arise, then, in connection with the Science of Yoga, is not to be wondered at, as long as the traveller has before him merely the spectacle resulting from its degradation, instead of the actual principles of the Science itself, which can only be obtained by extensive study. For let us suppose that a Thibetan, for instance, should come to London, having no knowledge of the tenets of Christianity, and only having heard that England was, or regarded itself at any rate as a Christian country, and what would he see? Why, on the one hand the extremes of luxury, and on the other hand, squalor, drunkenness, crime, immorality, incest; families living together in such abject poverty that a dozen people are herded together in one room,—and so on and so forth. And as a result of this, what indeed would be his opinion of Christianity's great Founder? But should he on the contrary read the Sermon on the Mount, he would come to take a very different

view of the subject, and also come to know that what he beheld in the streets of London was no representation of true Christianity at all. Nor, turning to the sacerdotal side of the matter, would he be able to discover in the teachings of Christ anything which advocated quarrelling among the sects on this or that point of dogma, or luxury and display on the part of Popes and Cardinals and bishops, living in grand palaces and thus being utterly unlike Jesus himself, Who 'had nowhere to lay His head'! Nor again would he find anything in the Gospels which advocated the particular form of Church service prevalent to-day, and consisting in a crowd of people gathering together and offering up 'vain repetitions'; seeing that Jesus particularly admonished His disciples to pray in secret, and not to engage in such repetitions at all, for to do so was to be guilty of Pharisäism and nothing more nor less.

THE SCIENCE OF YOGA TAUGHT IN ENGLAND.

Yogis, then, to be met with in the streets of Benares or elsewhere in Indian public life, are not a representation of the Science of Yoga; for the true practitioner of Yoga never parades the fact that he *is* a Yogi, save under exceptional circumstances. Indeed, we have it on the authority of an Adept, that no less than a hundred genuine Yogis reside in England amongst us at the present day: and yet they live so unostentatiously that they only reveal their great knowledge and power to their

disciples and to no others. Moreover, it must not be supposed that these Yogis are Indians, for the Science of Yog Vidya has been taught in Great Britain for over 300 years, though kept very secret, in that, as already inferred, great powers accrue to its practitioners, and so only he who has developed very especial heart-qualities can be entrusted with initiation, just as in ancient times only such could be entrusted with the secrets of the *Mysteries* as they were then called.

CLAIRVOYANCE A SCIENCE

Now, however much the uninitiated may scoff at, and seek to negate the unusual faculties of clairvoyance in its various branches to be found in certain people, yet when they come to know that the development of this 'sixth sense', as it is often called, can actually be brought about by instruction (as one can instruct people how to play the piano for instance) they may cease to scoff, and find that ignorance was solely the cause of their scepticism. For it so happens that clairvoyance is latent in everybody, and can be brought into manifestation by the practice of Yoga, under a competent teacher, with even more certainty than the acquisition of proficiency in piano playing. And the methods by which it is attained are partly physiological and partly mental, though it is even possible to bring it about by methods which are *solely* physiological; a fact ruling out the possibility that clairvoyance is the result of auto-suggestion

or self-hypnotisation (1). Moreover there is another factor in the case, which if known, proves that clairvoyant vision is not the outcome of morbidity and neurasthenia ; namely the fact that a genuine Yogi possesses the very perfection of health ; for the very exercises which produce Yogic powers, at the same time produce a healthiness and strength of body totally unequalled by any method of physical culture.

But it will be asked, how is it that so many clairvoyants to be met with in every day life, are either tainted with hysteria or similar tendencies ? And the answer is, that clairvoyance, which is not developed by scientific methods, brings certain evils in its wake, just as the extreme development of the muscles of an athlete may be achieved at the expense of injury to the heart. Also, it must be added that any form of clairvoyance which goes hand in hand with hysteria or a sickly body is certain to be unreliable, proving correct at one time and totally incorrect at another.

THE MEANING OF THE WORD ' YOGA.'

It behoves us now, however, to state more specifically in what this great Science really consists,

(1) The inducing of self-hypnosis can only be brought about by a mental process. Self-suggestion is the act of dwelling on an idea so powerfully that one even brings that idea into actual manifestation or *thinks* one has done so, as is the case with people who dwell so long on illness that eventually they become ill.

as also what the Sanscrit word means. And to put it briefly Yoga means *union*, and from that very word comes our English word yoke. For the Yogi aims at nothing more nor less than God-consciousness or Cosmic-consciousness, which implies the union of the individual soul with the All-soul. And yet, the sceptic will immediately say, especially if he be not versed in metaphysics: 'Is such a thing possible'? And to this the Yogi has a very scientific, practical answer; for after contending that all knowledge to be of any value must be based on Experience, he proceeds to teach the methods by which that very experience may be gained. In other words, he says: 'I ask you to believe nothing on hearsay, but simply to prove the entire matter for yourself, which undoubtedly you *can* do after I have shown you the means.' His position in fact is somewhat analagous to the astronomer's who informs his students respecting a certain astronomical discovery, and adds: 'If you wish to prove the matter for yourselves, you must make certain calculations, or must look through this very powerful telescope, or do both as the case may be.' Now it would be folly for those students to answer: 'Oh, that is all very well, but we refuse to believe you, because we can't prove the truth of your statement without resorting to the unnatural means of looking through a telescope, or else making elaborate calculations.' And yet, that, in effect, is exactly what so many unreflecting persons argue in connection with the truths and powers arrived at through the practice

of Yoga. For they contend: 'If other planes of consciousness really existed, if there was really a post-mortem life, if mankind truly functioned in subtle bodies after they had lost the gross physical vehicle, then I ought to know of these facts here and now without having to practise unnatural (?) exercises or go through strange initiations? For if people possess spirits (so called) then I ought to be able to see them with the naked eye, and until I can do this I refuse to believe in their existence.' And yet to these arguments the Yogi answers: (1) As regards what is natural and what is unnatural, it is surely *more* natural to arrive at knowledge solely by training the mind and body themselves, than by having to resort to the aid of a mechanical instrument such as a telescope, for instance; and (2) as to seeing the subtler bodies of the 'departed' with the naked eye, does the fact that the X-rays are not perceivable in such a manner disprove their existence, or that the oxygen in the air cannot be smelt—if the expression be permitted—by the naked nose disprove its existence either? Moreover are there not hundreds of undeniable facts in the universe that a young child cannot perceive or know, which as soon as he grows up are cognisable, by reason of his added faculties? For, after all, the perception of most facts is a matter of growth and the bringing of latent faculties into manifestation: and just because a human being has arrived at manhood, it by no means proves that all his latent faculties are exhausted.

CONCENTRATION AND ITS OBJECT

And so, taking all this into account, the object of the Yogi is so to train his faculties that he can perceive the finest forces in nature, and ultimately the soul itself. In other words, he wishes to arrive at *pure consciousness* beyond the modifications of the mind; but in order to achieve this, he has to suppress those modifications by the power of perfect concentration; indeed, one of the most difficult of all tasks. And yet, although nowadays there is a great deal of talk concerning concentration, people seem nevertheless very hazy as to its rationale, so that a word of explanation must be given here; and it were best put forward in the form of a simile. For let us picture to ourselves a lake on which there are a number of ripples set in motion by the breeze. Now unless those ripples be suppressed to the extent of absolute calm, it is impossible to see the bed of that lake. And the Yogi says it is similarly the case with the mind and its modifications; for the total suppression of the ripples, as it were, on the lake of the mind is his supreme aim—and this, in order that he may see what is *behind* the mind.

But the important point to be noted is this: that anyone who succeeds in really suppressing those waves, reaches a state which is so great an expansion of consciousness as to be termed super-consciousness or (in the Sanscrit Yogic term) *Samadhi*. And let it further and especially be noted, that this Samadhi is no theory but an *experience*, and one abso utely

certain to accrue (as it *has* accrued) to all those who will endeavour to reach it by the right means and the essential progressive stages. And that is to say: that if the mind learns first to concentrate upon an object, and then is capable of continuing in that concentration for a length of time, and finally by still continued concentration can dwell only on 'the internal part of the perception of which the object was the effect, everything comes under the control of such a mind.'

SAMADHI OR SUPER-CONSCIOUSNESS

And here we cannot do better than quote a passage from Swami Vivekananda's elucidating book on Raja Yoga (Longmans). For he says: 'The mind should first be employed in perceiving the external causes of sensations, then the internal motions, and then its own reaction. When it has succeeded in perceiving the external causes of sensations by themselves, the mind will acquire the power of perceiving all fine material existences, all fine bodies and forms. When it can succeed in perceiving the motions inside by themselves, it will gain the control of all mental waves, in itself or in others, even before they have translated themselves into physical energy; and when he will be able to perceive the mental reaction by itself the Yogi will acquire the knowledge of everything, as every sensible object and every thought is the result of this reaction. Then will he have seen the very foundations of his mind and it will be under perfect control. Different powers will come to the Yogi, and if he yields to

the temptations of any one of these, the road to his further progress will be barred, for such is the evil of running after enjoyments. But if he is strong enough to reject even these miraculous powers, he will attain to the goal of Yoga; the complete suppression of the waves in the ocean of the mind: then the glory of the soul, undisturbed by the distractions of the mind, or motives of the body will shine in its full effulgence. And the Yogi will find himself as he is and (in reality) he always was, the essence of knowledge, the immortal, the all-pervading. . . . This state of Samadhi is the property of every human being. . . Each one of the steps to attain it has been reasoned out (*i.e.*, in the Science of Yoga), properly adjusted, scientifically organised, and if faithfully practised will surely lead us to the desired end. Then will all sorrows cease, all miseries vanish—and the soul will be free forever.'

THE DIFFICULTY OF THE TASK

Now although the task of bringing the mind to a state of perfect concentration may sound perfectly easy in theory, yet in practice it is one of paramount difficulty. Indeed so simple does it sound, that many an impulsive person would be inclined to say: 'Oh, I can do this with comparative ease, and as to a teacher, why he is quite unnecessary. Who needs a teacher for such a purpose?' And yet, such a person is exactly like an ignorant man, who, hearing for the first time of a flying-machine, foolishly exclaims: 'Now there is no

obstacle to our reaching the moon'. But only let him try, and then he will see how far he will get either towards the goal of suppressing the modifications of the mind, or towards the moon: for, as to the former, he will not succeed in keeping his mind absolutely one-pointed even for a quarter of a minute, let alone an hour and twenty minutes which is the requisite period in order to attain the goal (1). Nevertheless, there are means whereby to minimize the apparently unsurmountable difficulty of the task; and it is just here where the teacher, or Guru as he is called, is absolutely necessary. For as already said, the Goal of Yoga may be attained by physiological means, connected on the one hand with pressure on certain centres of the body, and on the other, with retention of the breath to a degree which a doctor, for instance, might regard as impossible: and in one sense his surmise were correct, for without the necessary preparation such retention *would* be impossible, and undoubtedly end in death.

THE REASONS WHY YOGA IS PARTIALLY A SECRET SCIENCE

And this brings us to the reasons why Yoga to some extent is a secret Science, and not to be learned from books without the guidance of a Teacher. For to begin with, should anyone try

(1) The Yogi who succeeds in concentrating his mind on Perfect Bliss for one hour and twenty minutes will retain that Bliss as a consciousness (*i.e.*, of unconditional Bliss) for the remainder of his life.

to pracise these particular physiological exercises independently, he is not only likely to fail in achieving results, but also to bring upon himself diseases of a very serious nature both physical and mental. Moreover, many of the exercises are not committed to print at all, and can only be obtained from a Guru; the reasons being obvious after what has just been stated. But there is yet that further reason of which it is necessary to remind the reader, namely, that the exercises bring about certain powers in the practitioner, which if employed to evil ends were utterly disastrous for mankind at large. And so it is that Yoga is zealously guarded, and only given out to those whose moral nature is of a very high order and who have first been put to the test, so that the Guru may be absolutely assured on this point. Nor must it be forgotten, that a high moral nature involves an absence of vanity, and that form of selfish ambition for name and fame, which might prompt the Yogi to 'show-off' his powers before an audience. Indeed such a display is absolutely prohibited by the Guru; and largely accounts for the fact, so puzzling to the unreflecting, that a Yogi does not seek to convince mankind by taking the Albert Hall and giving an exhibition there like a conjuror or a mountebank.

SPIRITUALITY AND MIRACULOUS EXHIBITIONS

The fact is, the Yogi knows full well that mankind cannot either be convinced or rendered more

spiritual by witnessing such an exhibition: for just as Mr. Paderewski by playing the piano blindfolded, could not make his audience more musical, or in any way awaken the musical faculty in those who did not possess it, equally so is it the case with the Yogi and mankind. As Jesus Himself tried to impress upon His listeners, miracles prove next to nothing as regards spirituality, though they do prove the existence of laws in Nature hitherto undiscovered by the generality of the race—though, leaving it at that for the moment, we shall revert to the matter later on in connection with the Christ-stories.

CHURCH DOGMAS

But at this juncture, we must turn from the Science of Yoga, to a scrutiny of *The New Testament*, in order to propound our further reasons for supposing that Jesus was a Yogi, and *not* what the Agnostics regard Him on the one hand, or the Church on the other. Now, at the commencement of this argument we alluded to that form of ignorance resulting in absolute conviction respecting certain 'facts': that conviction taking the form of either positive denial or positive assertion. And to deal with that particular Church-dogma on which so much is supposed to depend—namely that Jesus was the only begotten Son of God—we are compelled to state that it was born of what we may tersely call this 'ignorant conviction' and is still fostered by such—that is to say, ignorance of what biblical

research has brought to light, as also of the inevitable results of deduction arising from an unprejudiced scrutiny of the Gospels themselves. For if Jesus regarded Himself as the only Son of God, how could He have said to Mary Magdalene : ' I am not yet ascended to my Father, but (meaning obviously, *therefore*) go (thou) to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto *my* Father and *your* Father and my God and *your* God (1). And again if it was possible for Him only as the literal Son of the Deity to be perfect, why should He have said : ' And ye shall be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect ? ' And furthermore, when asked a certain question, did He not remind His questioners that in their own Scriptures it was stated : ' Ye are all gods ? ' Nay, is it not obvious from these highly mystic sayings, that ' each soul is potentially divine ' (2) and if he will but follow the rules of the Higher Life as laid down by Jesus, he will eventually come to manifest that divinity and realise his one-ness or At-one-ment with the Father, as Jesus did Himself ?

For this final aim has been put forward as the basis of all the Higher Occult Schools, long before the advent of Jesus on earth, and is the goal of that form of Yoga known as Gnana Yoga, the chief object of which is to unify God and the individual soul, and to show the absolute one-ness that exists between them on the highest spiritual plane. As to the expression : ' I *ascend* to my Father ' it

(1) *John* XX, 17. (2) See *Raja Yoga*, by Swami Vivekananda.

convicts its own self of being a poetical metaphor; for, if '*in* God we live and *move*, and have our being' a literal ascension to Him, as if He resided somewhere in the clouds, and only there, were an absurd unnecessity almost too obvious to be worth mentioning. If, however, we come to know of the two species of salvation, or better said, *Liberation*, expounded by Occultism, the one being the Freedom of the soul while still in the flesh (1), and the other, the Freedom of the soul when it has dropped the flesh (2), this saying of Jesus becomes vested with dignity and sense, instead of implying an element of the grotesque, which it certainly does if taken literally (3).

THE MULTITUDINOUS GOSPEL COPIES

And now ere we proceed further, it were well to remind *some* of my readers that the documents of the New Testament were written in Greek; a fact which so many dogmatists entirely overlook, and with the result, of course, that a great deal of intolerance and quarrelling among the various sects and denominations takes place. For, as that learned and sympathetic biblical scholar, Mr G. R. S. Mead points out in his book on the *Gospels*: 'There are millions of unthinking folk who to all intents and purposes act and speak as though these

(1) The Yogic term is deha mukti. (2) *Videha mukti*. (3) To imagine the figure of Jesus ascending into the clouds or to a region above them like a balloon, were more liable to provoke laughter than reverence.

documents were written in Latin, or English, or German. The Roman Catholic meditates on the letter of the Vulgate or common Latin Version of Jerome (which the official decrees of his Church have declared to be equally inspired with the Greek text itself), the English-speaking Protestant pins his faith to the Authorised Version of King James, and the laity of the German Reformed Church seek their authority in the Version of Luther'. And as to the documents themselves, it is hardly necessary to state that 'no autograph of a single book of *The New Testament* is known to be in existence. We have at best to do with copies (that is to say the Greek MSS.), none of which goes back earlier than the fifth century. But these copies are certainly very numerous, for no less than 3829 MSS. have been already definitely catalogued, while it is believed that there are some 2,000 still uncatalogued, without taking into account a number of MSS. stored away in monasteries in the East, and as yet unsuspected and undiscovered by Western scholars'.

And what must inevitably be the result, when we have to do with documents copied and recopied? Is it to be wondered at that a great deal of the New Testament when scrutinized with unprejudiced and unglamoured minds is seen to make no sense; a fact we shall call attention to with the aid of examples later on? Indeed the received text is proved to have suffered in its tradition so many misfortunes at the hands of ignorant scribes and dogmatic editors, that the human reason stands

amazed at the spectacle. 'Can it be possible', it asks, 'that any soul possessed of God's good gift of reason, can believe the literal inspiration of such a collection of protean changes of words'? (Mead).

CONTRADICTORY AND MEANINGLESS SENTENCES

It will be seen then, from the foregoing, how dogmas arise from Ignorance, in that unreflecting persons take isolated sentences or statements in the Gospels and attach their absolute convictions to them, as if 'God' had actually written them with His own hand, instead of their having been copied and recopied and translated and retranslated: and this, even if another statement is in complete contradiction to the one on which they pin their faith. To take, for instance, the question of Heaven, we have on the one hand the statement: 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within and around', and on the other we have: 'Our Father who art in Heaven', and 'I *ascend* to the Father' (in Heaven) implying that the Father resides in the heavens above, living separated from man. And yet in spite of this, another passage proclaims: 'in Him we move and have our being' as already previously quoted. Then again we read: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God', whereas in direct contradiction to it we alight upon the phrase: 'no man hath seen God at any time'.

But this is not all, for there are sentences in the Gospels which are absolutely devoid of sense in themselves, though some people are so glamoured

by biblical words and phrases that they may read them hundreds of times without realizing their total lack of meaning. The sentence, for instance, which runs: 'touch me not for I am not yet ascended to my Father' is utterly devoid of sense as it stands; for how could she (Mary Magdalene) touch Him if He had already ascended? And this is only one out of many, and one, moreover, not to be accounted for by a faulty English translation, since it is equally meaningless in the Greek.

AGNOSTICISM AND 'MIRACLES'

Now the Agnostic gets out of the difficulty by accounting for Jesus, as depicted in these Gospels, by that growth of myth which arises around illustrious persons, and has arisen around many another as well as Christ. In other words, never having witnessed a so-called 'miracle', he dogmatically asserts that no such things exist or ever existed in connection with Jesus or anyone else; and holding this view he triumphantly points to the discrepancies and absurdities of the Gospels as the proof of its rectitude. And yet just herein is the danger of inductive reasoning, for unless the reasoner is absolutely certain he is in possession of all the facts of the case, the whole structure may fall to the ground. Prior to Columbus, to give an example, a Spaniard might have found hundreds of arguments to 'prove' that no other continent existed in addition to those already known; but as soon as that venturesome voyager discovered

America, all those arguments are found to be so much waste of words. And it is exactly the case with so-called miracles, for as soon as a person comes to witness many such, or even one, unless he is devoid of 'intellectual uprightness' (to borrow a phrase from Nietzsche) he is compelled to admit their existence (1). Now there is no getting over the fact that hundreds of these 'miracles' may be witnessed nowadays by persons who know how and where to seek for them. And to mention one such, the author is acquainted with a lady who can handle red hot coals with her naked fingers; and not only that, but deprive them of their capacity to burn any object with which they may be placed in contact. That is to say further, that she can put a glowing coal or log against another person's face without his feeling any heat from it whatever. Again, it must be mentioned that certain Yogis teach their pupils to perform 'miracles', not that they may 'show-off' by exhibiting them to others, but that they may gain greater faith in the Science of Yoga, and so acquire the will to progress further along the Path.

BIBLICAL INACCURACIES NO DISPROOF OF 'MIRACLES'

The fact then, that miracles may be witnessed nowadays, puts another face on those of Jesus,

(1) The author uses the word 'miracle' purely for convenience's sake; he means by this word merely the control of forces unknown to the generality of mankind at the present time.

and robs the Agnostic of his triumph; and this, because those very discrepancies in the Gospels to which he points as the basis of their negation, argue rather for their existence than otherwise. And why? because if any man—especially an illustrious man—performs an unusual feat or number of feats, the sensation he creates thereby is sure to prompt his onlookers to spread the news of the matter far and wide; each one who relates the story differing respecting its details; seeing that such is the tendency of human nature. If, however, the feat had never taken place at all and a sensation never been created, then no ship, as it were, would have been launched on the tide of gossip, and the whole matter were as unproductive of 'talk' as the ordinary and natural event of Mr Smith taking a walk in Piccadilly or buying a new hat in Bond Street.

MODERN PHARISAISM

But there are some persons who go further than the denial of the biblical and other miracles, and state that no such person as Jesus existed at all: the discrepancies in the narratives being sufficient to impel them to this opinion. So that we have the two extreme points of view; that of the ignorantly orthodox who maintain that everything He is supposed to have done or said, however conflicting, must in some strange and magical manner be true; and that of the ignorantly materialistic, who never having heard of Yoga, and

Occultism, and Occult Research, contend that Christ is a myth and nothing more nor less. And yet, strange though it may sound to the pious, the latter standpoint is almost of more value than the former : that is, if it be based on reflection and study (however limited) ; for the mere blind unreasoning following of other peoples' opinion, which the orthodox conception implies, is a formidable stumbling block to true spirituality. Indeed, this very thing, according to the Gospels themselves, is what Jesus regarded as Pharisäism, and what he strove to combat. And yet, reflecting on all that has taken place since He preached in Palestine, we are compelled to state He did not succeed—for Pharisäism is not dead, it has merely altered its form in a very slight degree. Instead of salvation being supposed to depend on the conformity to certain petty rules and regulations, as it did in those days, it now is supposed to depend on conformity with certain petty dogmas. And what does this mean when divested of all glamour ? Why, that stupidity, lack of reason and logic, and hence extreme narrow-mindedness, are regarded as virtues when attached to religion or the sayings of Christ. And yet such attributes are absolutely hostile to spirituality ; far more so in fact than sexuality and so-called sin—as Jesus Himself said—for the heart of a ' sinner ' is larger and usually more full of love and sympathy and understanding than the heart of the Pharisee. Nor must we forget that the clergy *en masse* are themselves responsible for this Pharisäism on the part of their parishioners, for

instead of preaching against it they unconsciously advocate it ; a fact which has not escaped Mr. G. H. Wells for one, as it has not escaped others. For rightly does he contend in his recent book *God the Invisible King*, p. 62, ' The clergy of our own days play the part of the New Testament Pharisees with the utmost exactness and complete unconsciousness ; one cannot imagine a modern ecclesiastic conversing with a Magdalen in terms of ordinary civility, unless she was in a high social position indeed, or blending with disreputable characters without a dramatic sense of condescension and much explanatory by-play '. But this is merely the one side of their Pharisäism, the other being that insistence on *belief* in this or that unreasonable dogma already referred to—in other words, that process which cramps the heart, the soul and the intelligence, in a way totally hostile to the necessities of the spiritual life.

THE QUESTION OF 'BELIEF'

Now the fact which the clergy have overlooked is this ; that spirituality goes *beyond* the intellect, it does not stand *below* it : therefore mere belief, resulting from a blind unreasoning perusal of the Bible—or any other book, for that matter—is utterly valueless as a means to spiritual emancipation. And yet, one may ask : how did this insistence on belief come into being, for it must have some sort of a basis ? And the answer is very simple, seeing that the Greek word rendered

'believe' means something infinitely stronger; namely love, trust in, meditate on, centre one's entire being upon—one or all of these things.

And this brings us back to the Science of Yoga and the teachers of that Science, for if we render many of the sayings of Jesus with the adequate translation of the words *believe* and *belief*, we get exactly what any adept in Yoga (or Guru, as he is called) would say to his pupils. That is: 'If you will follow out my instructions to the full and endeavour to centre your whole mind on the Eternal, Unchanging Reality (the Father) you will attain to Liberation (Salvation). But of course to achieve this you must have implicit faith in my teachings and in the Science of Yoga, and love that Science better than anything else; for only when that love is present can you hope to progress along so difficult (1) a path'.

NEW TESTAMENT TRANSLATORS NOT INITIATES

We have seen then, that an adequate rendering of the word 'belief' brings us to a conception consistent with that of Jesus as a Yogi and a Guru; but what strengthens this conception still further is the fact that a number of words of equal importance have also been inadequately rendered, or at any rate offer alternatives which coincide with our present point of view. And from this we gather a matter of considerable importance; namely

(1) Narrow is the gate and only few there be that find it (*New Testament*).

that if the Gospels had been translated by Initiates in Occult Science, instead of by mere scholars, we should possess in them the life and sayings of a great Adept who preached the way to Liberation, instructing his chosen disciples in the ' mysteries ', not to be divulged to the populace, while to the rest he taught the preliminaries in the shape of how to prepare the heart and body for initiation. But these translators not being Initiates, we have on the contrary, the life of a Character, who at one moment is pourtrayed as the only begotten Son of God, and at another, a person who uses strong language and loses his temper, destroying a fig tree on one occasion and a number of pigs on another, while on a third, he takes a whip and belabours a lot of money changers and bird-mongers who, in accordance with Jewish customs, were only carrying out their trade in a perfectly legitimate way. But of course, we do not imply that the English translators were responsible for all this psychological medley of human characteristics, for we have to deal with the fact that the copyists and recopyists of the Greek versions themselves were obviously not initiates either ; also the growth of myth, and the refuse gathered by the tide of gossip, so to say, has very considerably to be taken into account.

THE YOGIC CONCEPTION OF JESUS A HIGHER ONE THAN THE ORTHODOX

And yet allowing for all this, and granting that Jesus was a sublime character and not the somewhat conceited and rather ill-tempered man that the

narratives at times imply, yet we contend that the conception of Him as a high Adept is a far more fertile and imposing one than the notion that He was the only Son of God. And why? Because between a man and a god (1) there is fixed an impassable gulf; and therefore 'to try to be like Him' is to attempt what reason must tell us is an impossible task. But on the other hand, the doctrine that each soul is potentially divine, and that it is possible for each one of us to reach the state of Adeptship if we but choose, and also to attain God-consciousness or that *unconditional* bliss, which, when once attained, nothing can deprive us of, irrespective of whether we elect to retain our physical body (2) or not; such a doctrine is indeed an incalculable impetus to spiritual striving, and one which appeals to the man of intellect in a way the other never can.

And yet the reflective person will say: 'It may be a higher conception, but is it true?', while the clergy in their 'cocksureness' will emphatically deny that it is higher, irrespective of whether it be true or not; though they will be compelled to deny its truth, of course, in addition. Nevertheless, what do we glean by an inspection of early Church History? For the following significant facts come to light: namely, that the Bishop Paul of Samosata denied the divinity of Christ at the first Council of Antioch, seeing that at the very birth of theo-

(1) As the ordinary Christian understands the term.
(2) An Adept can retain his physical body for several hundred years if he wishes.

logical Christianity He was called 'Son of God' solely on account of His holiness and good deeds. Then at the Council of Nicea, A.D. 325, Arius came forth with his premises, which all but broke asunder the Catholic Union, seventeen Bishops defending his doctrines; for which, however, he was exiled. Then thirty years later at the Council of Milan, three hundred bishops signed a letter of adherence to the Arian views, in spite of the fact that ten years previously (A.D. 345) the Eusebians at a new Council of Antioch had proclaimed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and One with His Father. And then for several centuries following, the Councils fought and quarrelled, supporting the most contradictory views, the result of that strife, which often involved actual physical violence (1), being 'the present living paradoxes called Church-Dogmas'.

DOGMAS THE RESULT OF LITERALIZING

Now it would seem that these turbulent bishops suffered from a total lack of any sense for the poetical or metaphorical in their mental constitutions, and that the result was this violent strife about a matter in reality very easy of solution. Indeed it is obvious that all dogmas have arisen purely as a result of literalizing what was originally solely a poetical expression; for it must be known, that occult and Yogic literature throughout the whole world is written in poetical language, as also the fact that

(1) At one of these councils St Flavius was so ill-treated by Bishop Fisdorus, who assaulted and kicked him, that he died very shortly afterwards from his injuries.

Yogis use poetical metaphor for the purposes of instruction. That Jesus used the expression 'Father' as a poetical way of describing God in order to make Him intelligible to the masses is obvious; and that Jesus should be and actually was called a Son of God because of His great sanctity, as many another Yogi has been called likewise, is also obvious, and that He eventually should come to be regarded as the *only* Son of God is not an unlikely corollary, expecially if we take into account a theory put forward by one or two scholars, concerning the Greek word monogenes. For according to Shri Parananda, in his very elucidating book called *An Eastern Exposition of St John's Gospel* the word 'monogenes' should be rendered not 'only-begotten', but '*alone-become*', in that the soul which had been associated for ages with the gross and subtle bodies is found in the highest stage of spiritual communion (*i.e.*, Samadhi) to be 'alone', that is, freed of every rudiment of earthliness and the bonds of those gross and subtle bodies. In other words, this state of *Isolation of the Spirit* from everything that is of the world (or flesh or corruption) is what is meant by alone-become, and it is the great spiritual experience known only to those who have succeeded in Gnana Yoga or Raja Yoga, being designated by them Kaivalya (1), meaning literally aloneness (2). It is only just

(1) *Ibid.* (2) One-ness with God and alone-ness, though seemingly different are the same. For God is the only *simple* in the universe. Nature is a compound, only when we succeed in getting beyond nature do we attain Kaivalya—alone-ness from Nature and one-ness with God.

to state, however, that so learned a biblical Greek scholar as Mr Henry Scott points out that he regards such a conception of the word as unwarranted, for in every instance it is translated only-begotten (such as only begotten son of his mother, meaning merely an only son). But considering no scholar has before him the original MSS. of the Gospels, it seems not unlikely that with all the copying by scribes who were obviously uninitiated, the primal mystical meaning of the phrase has been lost, especially as another great scholar, Mr G. R. S. Mead holds more or less the same view as Paranananda ;—namely, that only-begotten means *created alone*, and that is to say, created from one principle and not from a syzygy or pair.

THE RESULTS OF CLAIRVOYANT INVESTIGATION

We will now, however, turn to clairvoyant research and its results, for it must be known that there exists what are termed the Akashic Records or Memory of Nature, and that after the Yogi has undergone a certain degree of training, he acquires the faculty to read these records—though unfortunately we cannot enter into the rationale of the subject, which would take many volumes to explain. Suffice it to say that Akasha is a Sanskrit word meaning Primary substance ; and its nature is of such exquisite fineness and so sensitive, that the slightest vibrations of the ' ether ' in any place in the universe registers an indelible impression upon it. Thus, when the mind of man

through long occult training can attain to a very high degree of clairvoyance, he is able to enter into a conscious recognition of these Akashic impressions, and may read them and translate them into any language with which he is familiar. We will see then, what Mr C. W. Leadbeater of the Theosophical school has to say on the subject, as the result of investigation along these lines; for he writes as follows: 'Certainly the Christian bible ought not to be taken literally, for many of its statements are symbolical and others are simply not true. When we examine clairvoyantly the life of the Founder of Christianity, for example, we find no trace of the alleged twelve Apostles; it would seem that as men they never existed, but that they were introduced into the story for some reason, possibly to typify the twelve signs of the Zodiac. The disciple Jesus, whose body was taken for the Christ, was not an illegitimate son as implied in the Gospel, nor was His father a carpenter. He was in reality of the highest aristocracy of the Jewish Nation. . . . He may, however, have had a tinge of Aryan blood in him. . . .

'The truth is that the four Gospels at any rate were never intended to be taken as in any sense historical. They are all founded on a much shorter document written in Hebrew by a monk named Matthæus who lived in a monastery on a desert to the south of Palestine. He seems to have conceived the idea of casting some of the great facts of initiation into a narrative form, and mingling with it some points out of the life of the real Jesus

who was born 105 B.C., and some from the life of another quite obscure fanatical preacher who had been condemned to death and executed at Jerusalem about 30 A.D.

'He sent the document to a great friend of his, who was the chief abbot of a high monastery at Alexandria, and suggested to him, that he or some of his assistants might perhaps recast it in the Greek language. The Alexandrian abbot seems to have employed a number of his young monks upon this work, allowing each of them to try the task for himself and to treat it in his own way. A number of documents of varying merit were thus produced, each incorporating in his story more or less of the original MS. of Matthæus, but each also adding to it such legends as he happened to know, or as his taste and fancy dictated. Four of these still survive to us, and to them are attached the names of the monks who wrote them: viz., Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The splendid passage with which *The Gospel of St John* opens was not original, but quoted, for we find it in existence in an MS. which was even then of hoary antiquity'. (Leadbeater, *The Inner Life*)

DID JESUS LEND HIS BODY TO A HIGHER INITIATE?

Now in this quotation there are two rather startling statements. One is that the illustrious Jesu-Christ lived 105 B.C., and the other is, that he lent His body to a very high Being called the Christ,

Who, we must go on to explain, appears from time to time, in order to act as a World-Teacher, and so give a spiritual impetus to the human race. Nor is this theory lacking in some convincing factors, for it has in it an explanation why Jesus was possessed seemingly of such antithetical phases of character—namely His impulsive and violent phases when cursing the fig tree and driving the money changers out of the temple or heaping invectives on the Pharisees, and on the other hand, his marvellous benignity and exalted eloquence and noteworthy tolerance on other occasions. And the supposition is, that the less laudable characteristics belonged to the man himself, who although of great purity of character was merely a neophyte and not an Adept, while the almost superhuman sublimity which at times he manifested was the result of this most august Being, either overshadowing him, or functioning through his body. Nor is his case by any means without an analogy in modern times, for if we reflect on that strange enigma, Madame Blavatsky of Theosophical fame, we find that those who knew her intimately state she was possessed of the most conflicting characteristics possible to imagine ; the reason being, according to occult knowledge, that she possessed the power of vacating her own body, so that other entities—and sometimes ones of a very high order such as Adepts—could enter it and so function through ' her '. But this does not imply those entities had not their own physical bodies elsewhere, nor is it supposed that the Great Being who used the body of Jesus, had not his

own physical vehicle also—though living in seclusion and not among the disturbing throngs of mankind.

And here again, we are absolutely in accordance with the teachings of Yoga, for we will quote from the *Aphorisms* of Patanjali (Longmans), known to be of hoary antiquity, though the gloss by Vivekananda is, of course, modern. And this aphorism runs: '*When the cause of bondage has become loosened, the Yogi, by his knowledge of manifestation through the organs, enters another's body*'. And the commentary to this is: 'The Yogi can enter a dead body, and make it get up and move about, even while he himself is working in another body. *Or he can enter a living body*, and hold that man's mind and organs in check, and for the time-being act through the body of that man'. And then the commentator goes on to explain technically how this is accomplished; though we cannot proceed to explain the rationale of the matter; merely referring the reader to *Raja Yoga* by Swami Vivehananda, should he wish to investigate for himself.

THE GOSPELS NEVER MEANT TO BE HISTORICAL

But as regards our point of view, it is not of very great importance whether Jesus had attained to Adeptship in Yoga, or was merely a Yogi who had still to attain, and in the meantime surrendered on occasions the use of His body to one who had already attained. The statement, however, reached through clairvoyant investigation that Jesus was born 105 B.C. is one we must scrutinize in order

to see whether ordinary and historical and deductive research can go to uphold in any degree its truth. And the answer is in the affirmative, in so far at any rate, that there is a great deal to be said for the contention, as Mr G. R. S. Mead has conclusively proved, in his book *Did Jesus Live* 100 *Years B.C.*, though the subject is of such magnitude, that we cannot hope to deal with it in this Introduction and must again ask the reader to peruse it for himself.

The statement, however, that the gospels were never intended to be historical is one we can deal with without entering into erudite technicalities unsuited to the general tenor of our book; for a very little reflection after scrutinizing those Gospels from this point of view will prove convincing. And to begin with, however horrifying it may sound to the orthodox, Jesus as depicted in *The New Testament* does not convince one as being a *reality*; a fact, by the way, which Mr Bernard Shaw has pointed out in his preface entitled *The Prospects of Christianity*. Indeed, the New Testament narratives, one and all, give a sense of entire artificiality to the human being of Jesus, rendering Him a complete contradiction to His teachings, and thus inconsistent with the 'Joyful tidings' He propounded. And yet, although this must strike numbers of people—as it has struck the author—on the other hand, the greater majority it fails to strike, for the simple reason that they omit, as already said, to regard the great Nazarene as a real creature of flesh and blood. That a human being should never smile, should never show any

joy, should be almost entirely devoid of humour, is a concept entirely at variance with fact; and yet never do the Gospels allude to any of these human traits; but what is more inconsistent, give the impression that Jesus was entirely 'a Man of Sorrows': so much so, that the phrase has become descriptive of Him in poetical portraiture.

JESUS AT VARIANCE WITH HIS TEACHINGS

Nevertheless, when we come to scrutinize His teachings with unprejudiced minds, at the same time possessing some knowledge of Divine Philosophies, we must realise that, this description is to Him as inapplicable as it could possibly be. Indeed, it shows a complete ignorance of what the Christ-consciousness implies, not to omit the significant fact, that if by following the precepts of Jesus we only end in becoming 'men of sorrow', there would be no inducement to follow those precepts at all. As Swami Vivekananda said: 'What is the use of any philosophy unless it bring us peace?' So that surely the first requisite of a Teacher is that he should have acquired in himself what he imparts to others. Nor can we fail to see the discrepancy between teaching and portrayal if we remember that Jesus particularly stated the 'Kingdom of Heaven is within' (a statement by the way, which agrees with the esoteric doctrines of all occult sciences): for the Kingdom of Heaven, if we admit it is anything at all, must be a bliss-consciousness, not to mention the fact that

he who carried out all the precepts of Jesus, could not fail to be a happy person, since charity, tolerance, love, forbearance and so forth are the very mothers of peace in themselves. And yet in the face of all this, as already said, Jesus is depicted as a " man of sorrows ', at any rate by one or two of the Gospel-writers (for their descriptions of Him and his character vary considerably); and so the result has been that the prevalent conception of Him is that of a rather sad, neurasthenic, frail-bodied person, instead of something quite the reverse.

THE SKETCHINESS OF THE GOSPEL STORIES

The biographical unrealities of the gospels do not end with this one glaring misrepresentation, but may also be seen from a scrutiny of details, dotted here and there throughout all the narratives. For we may take as one instance the following incident from *St Luke* (V, 27, 28) which runs: ' And after these things He went forth and beheld a publican named Levi sitting at the place of toll, and said unto him: ' Follow me '. And he forsook all, and rose up and followed Him '. Whereupon, we are informed, the said Levi gave a feast, on account of which the Pharisees found fault with Jesus for being present and eating with publicans and sinners. And I mention this incident because it demonstrates that sketchy unreality which is noticeable throughout the gospel stories. For it is obvious, that this unreality comes into existence

through the fact that only the most meagre indication of the actual sense of what Jesus said, or ought to have said, in order to propound some moral or spiritual truth, is set down, and nothing further; a fact which not only causes the reader to feel as if the story did not 'ring true' but also gives him an entirely wrong impression of the whole incident. Nor can one fail to see this unreality in another incident related in *St. John* (I, 35-42), when John standing with his two disciples 'looked upon Jesus as He walked, telling them to behold the Lamb of God'; whereupon the two disciples follow Him, so that He turns round and asks of them 'What they seek'? Then in return they ask Him: 'Rabbi (or Master) where abidest thou'? And (to continue in the words of the Gospel) 'He saith unto them; Come, and ye shall see. They came therefore and saw where He abode, and they abode with Him that day; it was about the tenth hour'. Indeed, if we face facts, we must realise how entirely wooden, unessential and thus unconvincing this incident and its narration appears—not to mention the fact that the English is very clumsy in addition. True it is, if we turn to that *Eastern Exposition of the Gospel according to St John* by Shri Parananda, we find the author construing the words 'come and see' to mean, 'I have no dwelling place of my own; wherever I am for the moment, that is my dwelling place'. But although this conception may be correct, in that every Adept looks upon Himself as a citizen of the whole world, and Jesus in *St Matthew's Gospel* is made to say: 'The Son of Man

hath not where to lay His head', yet that the brief phrase 'come and see' should in the Gospel-writer's estimation be sufficient to convey all, only shows that element of 'sketchiness' already alluded to; while if it merely means nothing more than is contained in the three words, then it is not worth relating; at any rate in that particular form.

THE MYSTERIOUS WORDS SUPPOSED TO BE UTTERED ON THE CROSS

But what can we obtain as further evidence of the liklihood of Mr Leadbeater's clairvoyant statement, namely, that the four gospels were merely written in order to cast some of the great facts of Initiation into narrative form? For to begin with, there is that most highly significant 'event', the crucifixion, and the almost still more significant words uttered on the cross: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me'?

And yet were those words ever spoken on the cross at all, since, to take the statements of the Theosophical School first, we read that Eli, Eli, Sabachthani does not bear that interpretation, but means the very opposite; namely, 'My God, my God, how thou dost glorify me'? Moreover, they are not taken from the *Twelfth Psalm*, the Hebrew of that Psalm being Eli, Eli, Lama Azabvthna-ni. But when, according to this school we come to the further fact that these very words were uttered by the neophyte after the terrible

trials of Initiation (being his words of thanksgiving), and belonged furthermore to Pagan temple rites, the whole matter becomes extremely significant.

So much then for the Theosophical School: and now we will see what other interpretations have been given to these most mysterious words; about which the greatest Hebrew and Aramaic scholars of all the various schools have differed so considerably. For that very highly enlightened Seer Mr Todd Ferrier, in his most remarkable book *The Master* gives the following interpretations: 'My Lord! my Lord! The Celestial Light is extinguished within my Spirit; it is death to me'. But let it be clearly noted in addition that the writer maintains these words were *not* uttered on the cross, as the one gospel states; though as to when, how and why they were spoken, this is a matter demanding for its elucidation a perusal of the book in question.

As to the Aquarian Gospel, we find stated therein yet another interpretation, though in this gospel the words, unlike the foregoing, are put into the mouth of Jesus while he hung on the cross: being, namely, 'Thou sun! thou sun! why hast thou forsaken me'? Nor need they denote any great anguish if taken in conjunction with the verses which precede them and which are descriptive of a solar eclipse.

And yet, even admitting the words express anguish and bear the interpretation placed upon them in the New Testament, far from going to disprove Leadbeater's statement, they go to prove it instead. And this, because as all occult schools

know, there does come a moment previous to attainment of the highest Samadhi, God-consciousness or state of Christhood—it matters not which we call it — when the Yogi feels himself utterly forsaken; when he needs must go through a terrible darkness of the soul before the appearance of the Eternal Dawn. And it is just this unspeakable Darkness after the crucifixion of *the flesh, or lower nature*, that was obviously depicted in the gospel—whether the crucifixion of Jesus took place as an actual historical event or not.

THE CLAIRVOYANT RESEARCH OF ANNA KINGSFORD, M.D.

We will now turn however to further evidence derived from clairvoyance; and dealing apparently with a later period of the beginnings of Christianity than that to which Leadbeater refers. For from that enlightened and remarkable seeress A. Kingsford, we get the following: 'I am looking at the inside of the Serapeum at Alexandria, the temple is connected with a library which as I see it, is still there, neither dispersed nor burnt, but filled with manuscripts—mostly rolls upon sticks. I see a council of men sitting at a table in a room of the library, and I see a number of names, as Cleopatra, Marcus Antonius and others. This is called the *second* library of Alexandria, the former having been destroyed under Julius Cæsar. . . . They are deliberately concocting Christianity out of the books

there ! and so far as I can see the Gospels are little better than Ovid's metamorphoses (historically, I mean)—so deliberately are they making up the new religion by replanting the old on the Jewish system '. (Here follows a note which runs : ' This " new religion " implies the systematic endeavour of the Alexandrian Mystics who are credited with the authorship of the Gospels . . . to construct on the basis of the history of Jesus a religion which should represent a symbolical synthesis of the fundamental truths underlying all previous religions '.)

' Every detail of the Gospel history is invented, the number of the apostles and all the rest. Nothing is historical in the sense supposed '.

' I see the Serapeum destroyed. It was destroyed by the Christians at the instigation especially of Theodosius, Ambrosius, and Theophilus. Their motive was a mixed one, each of the leaders having a different aim. The object of the concocters themselves was to sustain and continue the ancient faith by transplanting it to new soil and engrafting it on Judaism '. A fact evident from the number of ' events ' in the *Gospels*, arranged apparently ' that the scriptures or Old Testament prophecies *might be fulfilled*.' For let the reader note that the narrator does not state ' by this event *is* the Scripture fulfilled, *i.e.*, the event has happened and now the prophecy has come true ', but he implies that the event has been arranged (or concocted) to coincide with the prophecy, which is quite another matter. The object of Theophilus was to make the new

religion the enemy and successor of the old, by making it appear to have an independent basis and origin. Ambrose destroyed the library in order to confute the Arians by leaving it to appear that Christianity had an origin altogether supernatural. The concocters themselves did not intend it to be regarded as supernatural but as representing the highest human. And they accordingly fixed and accumulated upon Jesus all (?) that had been told of previous Christs—Mithras, Osiris, Krishna (or Chrishna), Buddha, and others—the original draft containing the doctrine of the transmigration of souls most explicitly and distinctly. The concoction was undertaken in order to save religion itself from extinction through the prevalence of materialism—for the times corresponded in this respect exactly to the present (1). And the plan was to compose out of all existing systems one new and complete, representing the highest possibilities and satisfying the highest aspirations of humanity.

The Serapeum was destroyed by the Christians in order to prevent the human origin of their religion being ascertained. The object was to have it believed that it all centred in one particular actual person, and was not collected and compiled from a multiplicity of sources. All the conversations in the Gospels were fabricated by the aid of various books in order to illustrate and enforce particular doctrines.

(1) Viz., 1888. Anna Kingsford died that same year. See *Clothed With the Sun.* Publ. : J. M. Watkins.

THE GOSPEL STORIES AND PARABLES IDENTICAL WITH OLDER RELIGIONS AND RITUALS

And what evidence can we find to substantiate the truth of this further clairvoyant research, for is it to be classed with hysterical vision or science? And as to the former, the answer is emphatically *no*, at any rate as regards the evidence of the concoction of the Gospels from other religions: for not only have the tenets of those other religions been introduced, but also other legends and stories. And taking the latter first, who has ever doubted the originality (or for that matter the historical Truth) of the touching narrative of the raising of Jairus' daughter? And yet the story is copied almost entirely from the *Hari-Purana* and is recorded among the miracles attributed to Christna, even to the very words in effect: 'Why do ye weep, for do ye not see she is asleep'? (1). Again in the *Vishnu-Purana* we find that Christna was nailed to a tree by the arrow of a hunter, who begging the dying god to forgive him, received the following answer: 'Go hunter through my favour to Heaven, the abode of the Gods'. 'Then the illustrious Christna having united himself with his own pure, unborn, undecaying universal Spirit, which is one with Vasudeva, abandoned his mortal body'. Again we find the story of the woman of Samaria at the well, taken from a Buddhist source and introduced with the proper local colouring into St. John's *Gospel*: while in Matthew we

(1) 'Weep not, she is not dead but sleepeth'. *Luke*, 9, 52.

find whole sentences from the ancient and sacred Egyptian ritual (1). For instance, the following is particularly significant: The 'soul' under trial is brought before Osiris, the 'Lord of Truth' who sits decorated with the Egyptian cross and holds in his right hand the fan (winnow) or flagellum of Justice. If the soul is found worthy, then the 'judge' says in effect: Let him go—he lived on truth, he has fed on truth: then come almost the exact biblical words: *He has given food to my hungry, drink to my thirsty ones, clothes to my naked.* And, to complete the resemblance, John is made to describe Christ as Osiris in the words: 'Whose fan (winnow) is in His hand, etc'. While furthermore in the parable (of the Kingdom of Heaven) He is called the Son of Man, Osiris being likewise called the Son.

THE LEGENDS OF THE THREE SAVIOURS NEARLY IDENTICAL

But we will now examine the close resemblances between the Christ or Jesus, and Christna, and also Gautama-Buddha; seeing the scrutiny of these three in conjunction is very enlightening. For beginning at the birth, we find that Christna descends from a royal family, but in spite of that, is brought up by shepherds, and hence called the Shepherd God. Gautama, on his part, is the son of a King, and his first disciples are shepherds and mendicants: while Jesus descends from the royal family of David

(1) Which preceeded our era by more than 4,000 years.

(or is made to do so) and is worshipped by shepherds, as also called the Good Shepherd himself. Again, we find that Christna is persecuted by Kansa, tyrant of Madura, but miraculously escapes: though in the hopes of killing the child, Madura has thousands of male infants slain: while Jesus on his part is persecuted by Herod, but escapes into Egypt through the warning (given to his parents) by an angel. Herod however to ensure his death, orders 'the massacre of the innocents'. As to Gautama; his life appears to have escaped the super-imposition of this strange legend, so that in this instance the similitude is lacking.

But now we come to the 'Virgin' story; for here again we find further resemblances, since Christna's mother was Devaki, and pronounced an immaculate virgin, though with the inconsistencies of legend, she had in some strange way given birth to eight sons before him; while Buddha's mother was Maya, married to her husband, yet also an immaculate virgin, and Jesus' mother was Mary, married likewise to her husband and also an immaculate virgin, until she gave birth to several children besides Jesus. And one could proceed to give further resemblances in the three lives did not space forbid.

GOSPEL PRECEPTS TAKEN FROM 'HEATHEN' SOURCES

But if the foregoing is convincing, when we come to examine the resemblances of the moral doctrines

we find them equally if not more so. For to take the following almost identical episode, in which Jesus is asked by a follower: 'What shall I do to obtain eternal life'? We find that He answers: 'Keep the commandments, namely, thou shalt do no murder, nor steal, nor commit adultery, nor bear false witness'. Similarly we find that the disciple of Buddha asks the identical question, receiving the very same answer in reply, namely: 'Keep the commandments'. Nor does the resemblance end here, for the Master answers: 'Thou shalt abstain from murder, theft, adultery, and lying'.

It would be erroneous however to suppose that the Gospel Doctrines and Precepts are merely taken from Indian sources, for they are also taken from Transcendental Philosophers, and such people as the Occult student regards as Initiates. For instance we obtain from Sextus the Pythagorean: 'Possess not treasures but those things which no one can take from you (1)' Again: It is better for a part of the body which contains evil matter and threatens to infect the whole, to be burnt, than to continue so in another life (2). And again: The greatest honour which can be paid to God is to know and imitate His perfections (3). And once again: What I do not wish men to do to me, I also wish not to do to men (4).

(1) See *Matthew*, VI, 19. (2) See *Mark*, IX, 43. (3) See *Matthew*, V, 45-8. (4) *Analects of Confucius.*

THE DOCTRINES OF KARMA AND RE-INCARNATION

Now there are two very important doctrines in occult science, which—although we have evidence that the earliest Church Fathers believed them—have fallen out of repute. And one is the ' theory,' if so we can call it, of Re-incarnation, while the other is that of Karma, or the Law of Cause and Effect or Sequence and Consequence. And yet, although these Yogic doctrines are not accepted by the clergy (with few exceptions) there is a saying put into the mouth of Jesus, which must either imply both these doctrines, or else something utterly incredible and undignified and unworthy of either a God of Love or Jesus Himself. Now Karma is simply the law of Cause and Effect carried to its logical conclusion, or in the words of the Gospel ' as a man sows so shall he reap '. And why ? Because according to the Yogi everything in Nature goes, as it were, round in a circle, and just as water, leaving the ocean in the form of vapour, becomes rain, and falling on the hills descends through rivulets and rivers again to the ocean from whence it came, so do all thoughts (that is if they be sufficiently strong) which a man projects from himself, come back to himself in the end ; the time for their return varying according to their grossness or subtlety. Indeed, if this were not so, why should all religions admonish a man to love his neighbour, and even his enemy, instead of hating him ; and the answer is, because that love must eventually come back to himself : nay, the Yogi goes on to say, that all virtuous actions

bring happiness eventually, while all vicious actions bring pain as their result. But it will immediately be asked: Why, if this be so, should the very kindliest and most saintly persons 'who have never done any injury to anyone on earth' be constantly followed by misfortune, for often we find this to be the case? And the answer involves the other doctrine alluded to, namely that of Re-incarnation: nor save in this, can we find any logical solution to the matter consistent with a God of Justice and Love. For to give an example—allowing for the moment that a man has had many lives, previous to the present one—let us presume that in those former lives he has led a species of vicious existence which has caused great pain to a number of persons; now the fact that in the present incarnation he has transformed himself into a 'perfect saint' will not prevent those past actions from bearing their evil results. Indeed, what were the alternative to this conception?—to suppose that a God of Justice and Love could be so guilty of favouritism as to create one soul and endow him with pleasure-bearing attributes or place him in ideal surroundings, while another he endows with a terrible congenital affliction or places him in a slum of the worst kind, is to suppose something quite incompatible with logic or even common sense. As to the notion that 'God loveth whom He chasteneth', well, it is equally void of justice, and invests God with favouritism as much as the theory just refuted.

But we must not fail to point out that there exists more than mere circumstantial evidence for the

Doctrine of Re-incarnation, in that the Yogi maintains that any person who practises the science of Yoga can eventually develop the memory of his past lives; as hundreds of Yogis and other psychic persons have done already. And so for this reason, Re-incarnation cannot with truth be regarded as a mere theory but a *fact* based upon experience.

KARMA AND RE-INCARNATION IN THE GOSPELS

And now, after the foregoing, we may examine those sentences in the Gospels already alluded to; the one being that enigmatical incident of the man born blind and the puzzling answer connected with it which Jesus gave to his disciples. For it runs: 'Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'. Jesus answered: 'Neither hath this (blind physical) man sinned nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him'. Now the orthodox interpretation is that the man was born blind in order that Jesus might have an opportunity of performing a miraculous cure, and so of exhibiting His power. In other words, God is supposed to have condemned this unfortunate man to years of blindness, in order that He (or His son) might be enabled to 'show off' at a future time—an interpretation which compels us to point out that orthodoxy worships its deity in a very strange way; namely, by imputing to Him actions and sayings which paint Him as a charlatan and a monster of

cruelty. But be that as it may, how much more logical it were to suppose there must be a more reasonable explanation, or that Jesus never said anything of the kind? Nor in the light of Yoga is that explanation wanting, especially if we take into account that Christianity possesses an esoteric side—a matter however we will touch upon later—for suffice it here to say, that Jesus unequivocally gave expression to the fact that he taught his especial disciples 'doctrines' and laws and 'mysteries' which he withheld from the man in the street.

THE SOLUTION TO THE BLIND-MAN ENIGMA

If we paraphrase the answer of Jesus, then, to his disciples on this occasion, and paraphrase it in the light of Karma and Re-incarnation, it would obviously run: The present physical body of this man has not sinned, nor did his parents sin to bring about his affliction, bnt he was born blind as the result of the working of the law of Karma: in other words he is now reaping what he sowed in a previous incarnation. As to the phrase: 'that the works of God should be manifest in him' it was obviously chosen by Jesus in order to express as briefly as possible the hidden operation of the finer forces and laws of Nature in connection with this man. In other words, by the term 'the works of God' Jesus wished to differentiate between the perceptible laws of the material world and the imperceptible laws of the spiritual world; for unless he was prepared to enter into a long metaphysical dis-

sertation, there was no other way he could bring the matter home to the minds of his interrogatants.

We must add, however, that the whole incident does not ring true as an actual historical event, or even a consistently well-contrived episode; so that here again it is obvious that the entire story was invented by the Gospel writers to introduce the particular doctrines already mentioned in the Gospels. Nor is our reason for supposing this far to seek; for having answered his disciples as described, Jesus then proceeds somewhat humorously to say (in effect): Life is short, therefore *we* must do good works for God while we can. And then follows one of those entirely artificial sentences, so often to be found in the Gospels, which more than ever bring home to our minds the fact that the various episodes were merely constructed to express certain spiritual truths, as clairvoyant investigation goes to prove, or else the 'truths' were superimposed on the episodes irrespective of whether they fitted well or ill. For Jesus is then made to say with an astounding and highly inconsistent lack of modesty: 'When I am in the world, I am the Light of the World' (1).

THE CURING OF THE MAN BORN BLIND NOT A MIRACLE

But after this what happens? For instead of Jesus (as the orthodox interpretation implies)

(1) Taken in isolation however, this sentence possesses a deeply mystical significance.

proceeding to perform a miracle, he makes a poultice of clay and spittle, a procedure which was a recognised therapeutical agency of those times (1), and applies it to the man's eyes ; then having done this, tells him to wash in the Pool of Siloam. Nor can we fail to realize the inconsistency of the whole episode, for if the man really suffered from congenital blindness, how should this poultice be expected to effect a cure, and yet if not, why should Jesus use a perfectly normal means if the case required no less than a ' miracle ' ? In short the episode does not bear the scrutiny of logic as an episode at all, and we are compelled to regard the seven verses in St John's *Gospel* in which it is embodied, as a contrivance to express certain occult truths and nothing more.

NICODEMUS AND RE-INCARNATION

But this is not the only instance of the mention of Re-incarnation in the Gospels, for if we turn to the discourse of Jesus to Nicodemus, we have the distinct statement that ' except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God '. And yet orthodoxy denies re-incarnation in spite of these very words, even when Jesus repeats them later in the phrase ' Marvel not that I said unto thee ye must be born again ' ! But the fact is, orthodoxy is ready to take certain verses absolutely literally, however evil an aspersion they may cast

(1) A poultice of clay is even now regarded by certain Hydropathists as a most effective therapeutical agent : see Kuhne, *The New Science of Healing*.

upon Jesus, as we have seen already, while to other verses it refuses a literal interpretation at all—and why? because, in this instance, the idea of re-incarnation does not appeal to it. It must be admitted, however, that unless the esoteric meaning of the words *water* and the *spirit* (1) be known the whole incident is difficult of comprehension: but the very rebuke of Jesus to his questioner is highly significant, for it implies that no one had the right to call himself a teacher (of Israel) unless he had been initiated into the mysteries with which the words *water* and *spirit* were associated. Indeed, research has proved that these very terms were occult terms used long before the time of Jesus, and used moreover in conjunction with the doctrine of re-incarnation. But even leaving that aside, and regarding the verses purely from the esoteric standpoint, it is fairly evident that *water* implies the body, in that Science teaches us, water constitutes some two-thirds of its total weight, while *spirit* means the essence of the undying soul: so that roughly speaking, a man comes to birth on the earth through the agency of water (or body) and 'spirit' combined. And especially may this be so if we reflect on the context, where Jesus says: 'That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit'; for if we examine this in the light of logic and metaphysics we must know that spirit is eternal and indestructible, and can neither be born nor die in itself.

(1) The words being 'Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God'.

In brief, *flesh can never produce spirit,* nor—and this is highly important—can that which is *eternal* ever have a beginning, for this is a mathematical impossibility. Nay, the notion that every time a child is born, God creates a new soul and injects it into a body like gas into a balloon—that soul then proceeding to live for ever and ever—is a notion based upon a complete ignorance of philosophical truth, and as absurd as the notion that 2 + 2 could make five. We therefore must paraphrase the sentence: that which is flesh is *the result* of flesh, while that which is spirit is the *result* of spirit. Indeed, Jesus goes on to emphasize this all-pervadingness of spirit by comparing it to the wind, in that we only recognize it by its sound, but are unable to say 'whence it comes or whither it goes'; that being likewise the case (He adds) with everyone born of the spirit.

But a word regarding the spiritual evolution of the Human Race would help to make clear the meaning of this passage, although its comprehension may deprive orthodoxy of its comforting doctrine that the only prerequisite to post-mortem entrance into the Kingdom of God is to lead *one* life on earth, and lead it moderately decently, being sure to couple it with a belief that Jesus was the Son of God. For the truth is, the Kingdom of Heaven which obviously means liberation of the soul or Nirvana (1), is not by any means attainable in

(1) Nirvana does not mean the annihilation of consciousness as the Westerner supposes, but only the annihilation of the reincarnating personality.

so easy a manner nor so short a time: and what people are apt to confound with the Kingdom of Heaven, is either the Astral Plane or Devachanic Plane; both of which are planes of comparative spiritual happiness whereon the 'soul' (1) functions between its physical incarnations. It is obvious then, that, by the term, Jesus meant the end of the journey, which is nothing less than perfection; the ultimate Goal of Evolution. And yet in order to reach this, why must the soul be constantly re-incarnating on the physical plane? And the answer is: because the effect must always come into operation on the same plane as the cause which was responsible for that effect. And if we put this matter concretely, it means simply; that unless a man is totally free from any desires connected with the physical plane, he must perforce re-incarnate in order that those desires (the cause) should be fulfilled (the effect). Now it takes a very long time before a human being has become so entirely free from worldliness that he ceases to produce any causes on this earth-plane at all: and so for this reason he has to be reborn again and again.

SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION AND THE GOSPELS

But we have just referred to the Spiritual Evolution of the human Race, and we have done so because occult science declares that sooner or

(1) We use the word *soul* here for convenience-sake, though in one sense it is incorrect, just as to talk of 'spirits' is equally incorrect.

later every soul must come to this Perfection. And in order to discern why this should be so, we will lay bare the philosophical ideas on which the theory (?) is founded. Now, according to the Yogi, the whole of the universe is composed of two substances, the first being called Akasa and being the omnipresent, all-penetrating existence. And this implies that everything which is the result of compounds is evolved out of this Akasa : though the Akasa itself cannot be perceived, seeing it is so subtle as to be beyond all ordinary perception. ' But by what power is this Akasa transformed into this universe with all its endless forms ? And that brings us to the second ' substance ' called Prana ; for just as the Akasa is the infinite omnipresent material of the universe, so is this Prana the infinite omnipresent manifesting *power*, seeing that from Prana is evolved everything we call energy or force. Indeed, according to the Yogi, from thought down to the very lowest physical force, everything is but the manifestation of this Prana. Wherever then there is life, the storehouse of infinite energy is behind it. Starting as some fungus or some very minute microscopic bubble, and at the same time drawing from that infinite storehouse of energy, a form is changed slowly and steadily, until in course of time it becomes a plant, and then an animal and ultimately God (1). And it will be readily seen from this that the theory of the Yogi and that of Darwin are very much the same, but with one cardinal difference ; namely that Darwin,

(1) Vivekananda, *Raja Yoga*.

although admitting the evolution of *forms*, omits (or at any rate fails to emphasise) the evolution of the life within, as it were, those forms: and just herein the Yogi seems more logical than the merely material scientist.

Now if the Gospels had not been so inadequately and faultily translated, a great many misconceptions and absurdities would not have come into existence, to begin with, and secondly we would find contained in them statements far deeper than clergy and laymen suppose. And especially is this the case with the matter under discussion, for we see that the word Æon or age has actually been rendered *world*. And especially is this unfortunate in connection with the answer Jesus gave to the Sadducees, for he said: They who shall be accounted worthy (*i.e.*, have progressed far enough) to obtain that *world* (rightly translated to *reach that age or Æon*) —neither marry—neither can they die any more. Indeed, could we have a clearer statement of the necessity for repeated rebirth until Perfection (or Nirvana) had been attained; for the expression "neither can they die any more" certainly implies they had already died and more than once?

THE PRIME OBJECT OF YOGA

And now, in connection with Evolution, what is the object of occult science or the science of Yoga? We will let the Yogi answer the question himself; for he says: 'A man may go on slowly drawing in this energy from the infinite mass which

exists in the universe, and perhaps he will require a hundred thousand years to become a Deva (a god) and then perhaps five hundred thousand years to become still higher, and perhaps five million years to become perfect. And yet, given rapid growth, the time will be lessened, for why is it not possible with sufficient effort to reach this very perfection in six months or six years? Reason shows that there is no limit. Why shall I not get that infinite Knowledge, infinite power now, in this very body, in this human form'? (1).

In short, the object of the Science of Yoga is, that one may hasten on one's evolution, and go the direct path upon the mountain side to Perfection instead of taking the slow circuitous spiral road. And further, the object with which all great Adepts, like Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Sankaracharya come forth into the world, is to show their fellow men how they may hasten on their evolution, just as those great Yogis have done themselves: and how? 'by controlling nature, external and internal'

CHRISTIANITY DOES POSSESS AN ESOTERIC SIDE

And here we come to that important point regarding the esoteric or occult side of all religions worthy of the name; for there was not one of these great Adepts who had not his especial disciples and entrusted them with knowledge for which the masses of mankind were unfit. And certainly Jesus, as portrayed in the Gospels, is no exception

(1) Vivekananda, *Raja Yoga*.

as regards this, seeing he distinctly said to his disciples: 'Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but unto them that are *without*, all these things are done in parables'. (Or as Weymouth renders it: 'Spoken in figurative language'). And yet, in spite of this unequivocal statement on the part of Jesus, there are a number of clergy and scholars—and they form the majority—who boastfully assert that Christianity possesses no esoteric side at all. And this in contradiction to the early Church Fathers, such as Origen for instance, who clearly stated that the Church was possessed of secret teachings. Moreover we have the definite statements of St Paul in addition; for he writes: 'We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world began and which none even of the princes of the world know' (1 *Corinthians*). But this is not all, in that we read that, having selected his disciples, Jesus sent them on a mission, and gave them power to heal diseases and cast out evil spirits and perform other apparent miracles; which in the light of Yoga means nothing more nor less than that he taught these disciples some of the Siddhis as they are called; that is to say, the seemingly miraculous powers which result from certain Yogic practices.

DOGMAS AND ESOTERICISM

But it is only if we admit an esoteric side to Christianity that we can possibly arrive at any

reasonable explanation of the otherwise senseless dogmas to be found, not only in the Christian religion, but also in its forerunners. Indeed, how can we explain the Virgin Birth, the Trinity, and the Atonement in a manner compatible with logic in its highest sense and the positing of a God of Power and Love worthy of respect, let alone adoration, unless we admit of the existence of a deeper and spiritual meaning? To suppose that God having created the world, made such a mess of the matter (to put it crudely) and that His 'children' having got so totally 'out of hand' He was forced to sacrifice His only Son, either to conquer an enemy called the Devil or else to appease His own wrath—for it is hard to learn which—is a notion so ridiculous and even blasphemous, that only infantile minds could entertain it at all. But when we come to know that the word 'son' has a specific occult meaning, that Atonement means really At-one-ment or union with (1), that the Virgin Birth likewise has a mystical significance, and that the Trinity is a philosophical conception to be found in existence long before Christianity, the esoteric absurdities of all these doctrines vanish under the light of esoteric sense. Nor must we forget to mention the crucifixion in its esoteric meaning, seeing it means the crucifying of the flesh or lower desires in order to attain the higher spiritual consciousness known as Samadhi or God-consciousness: and had the words put into the mouth of Jesus on the cross been correctly translated as

(1) Yoga means also union.

'My God . . . *how thou dost glorify me*', instead of '*Why hast thou forsaken me*'? then the esoteric meaning of the whole event would have been kept intact, in that with the complete crucifixion of the lower self, a consciousness, which can only be described as dazzling and replete with glory, comes into being. Indeed, Jesus obviously referred to this unutterably intensified consciousness, when He said, 'I am come that they (the sheep, meaning his followers) might have life, and that they might have it *more abundantly*': for unless by 'life' is meant *consciousness*, the phrase would be devoid of real sense. (*John*, x, 10).

THE ERROR OF PRIESTCRAFT

And this brings us to the terrible error of priestcraft, and the very error which Jesus himself sought to combat; namely, the materializing of the symbolic and sublimely figurative into the 'letter which killeth'. Indeed, this very materializing has alone been the cause of all the bloodshed and strife, which, needless to say, is utterly incompatible with the message and teachings of Jesus, who clearly showed by the parable of the sheep and the goats that he was totally against any form of dogmatism and intolerance, and that if the spirit of love and charity be present in the heart, little else matters; for the giver may never even have heard of Jesus of Nazareth, and yet in that he gives out of love, he is in so far at

one with God, which is Love Itself (1). For leaving aside the fact that the parable is based upon the Egyptian, as already shown, yet as put into the Gospels it clearly indicates that Christ intended it to mean that *belief* was nothing, while the heart-attitude was everything.

But how has this terrible error of priestcraft come into existence, for it is not limited to Christianity, but obtains in connection with other faiths as well? The answer is two-fold, in: the error arose from the decay of spiritual knowledge and the loss of the capacity to read with the eyes of the spirit, and from the desire on the part of priests for power, so that they might hold their flocks in subjection and wield the sceptre themselves. Nay, the reader need only examine Church history to realise this for himself; for we are not making this statement because we have any personal grudge against the clergy, but because it happens to be a historical fact.

On this latter priestly weakness however we do not intend to enlarge, but the decay of 'Knowledge' possesses factors which are of interest and bear a special significance in connection with the present argument. For the truth is, mankind has ever been confronted with the hopeless inadequateness of words as a vehicle for conveying facts: and especially does this become apparent in connection with spiritual, philosophical or mystical utterances. But here we will call a little

(1) In that ye have done it unto one of these little ones ye have done it unto me'.

incident related in the newspapers to our assistance ; for it expresses the error into which the human mind may fall, if it has to deal with mere words, and does not possess the key, in the shape of knowledge of a few simple facts (maybe) to unravel their meaning. For it relates how on a certain Sunday, when a family was engaged in the harmless pastime of singing Hymns, one child on being asked what Hymn he would like to sing next, replied : ' Let us sing the Hymn about the little boy who stole the old man's watch ' : the particular Hymn turning out to be as follows :

' The old man, meek and mild,
The priest of Israel slept ;
His watch the temple child
The little Levite kept '.

Now however humourously erroneous the conception of that child respecting these deplorably bad lines may be, yet to contend that the words do not actually *say* that the little Levite pocketed the old man's watch is absurd. Nevertheless, we know they mean nothing of the kind, merely because we possess a knowledge of a few simple facts connected with priests and temples which the child lacked. Had we however lost that knowledge, or never possessed it, we should be compelled to take the same view as the child did. But although people may smile with indulgent amusement at this infantile conception, they fail to realise that the conception they themselves place on certain phrases of Jesus (or Shakespeare, for that matter) may from the standpoint of the sage or philosopher

or saint, be equally provocative of indulgence; for not possessing the requisite knowledge or spirituality which acts as the key to the unlocking of the true meaning of such phrases, they place upon them, an interpretation as puerile (relatively speaking) and as far removed from truth as did the child on the verse of that hymn. Nay, more puerile, for the child had at least logic and common sense in his favour, while adults often discard both these laudable qualities and ask one to believe in the name of religion something which on the very face of it is sheer nonsense. And now our contention is this: that the clergy, having lost the knowledge of the 'mysteries, and secret teachings, lost in consequence the real meaning of most of the Gospels; with the result, that their interpretation of certain texts, seems, to the initiate, as incompatible with truth, as the supposition of the child that the young Levite stole the old man's watch: for both errors have arisen from the same cause, namely ignorance (1).

THE KEY TO THE CONTRADICTORY DOCTRINES

Now although that particular ignorance is more unfortunate than blameworthy, yet when it becomes the cause of spiritual pride and bigotry there is no

(1) We regret that the word 'ignorance' should possess an element of the unflattering, and its use imply a certain intolerance on the part of the user. We wish to say therefore, that in employing it we do not employ it in any other sense than ignorance of certain facts, and not that *Ignorance* which is blameworthy and spelt with a capital I!

denying that it assumes harmful proportions, and makes of religion something to be jeered at by a certain type of mind and temperament, instead of a philosophy and point of view which brings serenity and peace. That the clergy having lost the key to the underlying meaning of the sayings of Jesus should pronounce Him to be the Son of God, and then leave the logically-minded person to discover that His utterances were often entirely contradictory, is a misfortune which has alienated, and continues to alienate, the well-educated and intellectual. And yet, strange to say, those very contradictions are easily explained if we scrutinize them from the standpoint of Yoga; regarding Jesus as an Adept instead of the Son of God, or an ordinary religious, socialistic or revolutionary preacher. Indeed, the explanation is very simple; being nothing more than the fact that he adapted His utterances to the understanding and temperament of his particular listeners: a procedure which every Yogi does who is worthy of the title. And why? Because, although all roads lead ultimately to the same goal, yet all persons cannot follow the same road, by reason of their diversity of temperament. Now there are no less than four kinds of Yoga. Raja Yoga being the first (and the one we have sketched in this introduction) while the others are Karma Yoga, the path of selfless work, Bhakti Yoga, the part of Devotion, and Gnana Yoga, the path of intellect and wisdom. But although all these Yogas end in superconsciousness, yet in one sense the means to that end seem to contradict

one another: for just as Karma Yoga requires activity, Gnana Yoga requires contemplation, and again whereas Gnana Yoga is based on a Monistic Philosophy, Bhakti Yoga is based on a Dualistic System.

But the mistake the Church has made is to limit Christianity to the path of devotion (Bhakti Yoga) and make this path the sole prerequisite to salvation, for by so-doing it has, of course, alienated the philosopher and scientist who may lack the devotional temperament altogether. And yet, Jesus in the *Gospels* is nevertheless made to expound all the three Yogas enumerated (for the first, Raja Yoga, cannot be learnt from a book) as we shall see from a comparison of phrases. For whereas He said: 'I and my Father are one', and again 'The Kingdom of Heaven is *within*', the Yogi, following the path of Gnana or metaphysics, says: 'I am Brahman' or 'I am He', or 'I am Absolute-existence-knowledge and Bliss'. And again, Jesus said: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, thy whole soul, thy whole strength, and thy whole mind', while in the books on Bhakti or Devotion we read: 'The Yogi should feel God as closely related to his soul as he possibly can, and regard Him not only as the Lord of the universe, but as father, mother, brother, sister or friend'. Again Jesus says: 'Thy will be done', while the Bhakti Yogi says: 'Whatever is mine is Thine'. As to Karma Yoga, or the path of work, either for its own sake without asking for results, or for the sake of others,

and in this case asking for no reward, it is unnecessary to give examples from the *Gospels*, for so large a preponderance of the Christ-teaching advocates this. Suffice it to add, that to him who possesses the key of Yoga, all the contradictory utterances of Jesus bear their justification, for if the *Gospels*, as clairvoyant research maintains, were documents contrived for the purpose of placing some of the facts of this great science into narrative form, then the writers would be compelled to hint at the three different paths whether they contradicted one another or not.

IS A CERTAIN BELIEF VALUELESS BECAUSE UNTRUE ?

But although Jesus Himself, as portrayed in those *Gospels*, made allowances for the diversity of temperaments to be found in human beings, and thus showed a different road for each one to take, mankind has not followed His example. Indeed, instead of religious unity, we find religious variance in the shapes of hundreds of sects each thinking the other to be largely or entirely at fault on one or all points, and each alluding to the other with a certain disdainful indulgence, or else that form of pity born of supposed superiority. And here, the author is about to make a statement which after all that has been contended in the preceeding pages may sound contradictory and out of place : but to put it tersely, a thing is not of necessity *valueless*

because it is *untrue*, and consequently still less is it absolutely reprehensible.

To take the question of idol worship whether it be in Roman Catholicism, or Hinduism, or Buddhism—if idols are an assistance to concentration or worship, why condemn them as the Low-Church party does, as if the Hindu or Catholic actually worshipped the " Thing of stone ' instead of the Being, whether Saint or God it *represented*. One might as well say that a young man gazing at the photograph of his sweetheart loved the photograph itself instead of the person it represented. After all, everything is a question of degree, and just as the Roman Catholic or Hindu strikes the worshipper of a still personal (though unseen) God as an idolator, so does that very condemner of idolatry strike the Sage or Philosopher as an idolator himself. But there is one cardinal difference, namely, that the Sage never condemns him for his idolatry, seeing he recognises it as a necessary stage on the journey to a higher concept, or else as essential to the temperament of the particular worshipper. And so—although for the purpose of this book we have had to show we consider that Jesus Christ was not ' the only begotten Son of God ', and that such a concept is based on ignorance, yet because of that, we do not say the belief is valueless ; for to certain temperaments it has proved of incalculable spiritual value. Indeed, as long as that belief acts as an impetus to genuine devotion and spiritual love, acting also as a great moral example to be imitated and aspired to,

then whether it be based on actual fact matters little. But on the other hand what we have pointed out, is, that *mere* belief itself is utterly useless as a means to spiritual growth, and we may add that it has been foisted on an unsuspecting world by ignorant priests as a spurious means of buying salvation at the cheapest cost.

THE QUESTION OF THE MAN HMSELF

And now we are nearing the end of this lengthy argument, having endeavoured, by the comparison of Yogic teachings with those put forward in the *Gospels*, to prove that Jesus as therein represented was a High Adept, or wandering Yogi. But although we have dealt with the teachings, yet we have now to deal with the Man Himself; for it must be remembered that clairvoyant and other research certainly admits that He existed as an actual person, though it warns us not to regard the *Gospels* as historical.

We have henceforward then to deal with events rather than doctrines; and it must be admitted at the outset that very little is known of the actual life of Jesus—that is if we do not admit the historical element in the *Gospels*. On clairvoyant research therefore we are once more dependent, though whether my readers are prepared to give it credence is another matter, and one which largely depends on their previous knowledge of the subject.

But we will begin with events prior to the birth of Jesus, namely those expectations and prophecies

and descriptions concerning the advent of a Redeemer or Messiah, whatever that term may have been supposed to imply. And here again we are confronted with indications which go to show that the *Gospels* were taken from other sources, for if we compare them with the Hindu books we find most significant analogous passages. For instance we read: 'In the early part of the Kali Yuga (Dark Age) shall be born the son of a virgin (*Vedanta*), while in Matthew we have almost the identical words quoted from Isaiah, and running: 'Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son'. Again from a Hindu source we have the prophecy: 'The Redeemer shall come, and the accursed Rakhasas (evil entities) shall fly for refuge to the deepest hell (*Atharva*). While in the *Apochryphal Gospel of Nicodemus* we read: 'Behold now Jesus of Nazareth with the brightness of his glorious divinity, put to flight all the horrid powers of darkness'. And again from the same Hindu writ: 'He shall come . . . more pure than the lamb without spot': while in the *Gospel According to St John* we read: 'Behold the Lamb of God'. And once again a Hindu passage runs: 'Happy the blest womb that shall bear him', similarly the massage in *Luke* runs: 'Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb'. Nor can we pretend that these Hindu books referred to Jesus, for they unmistakably refer to Christna (or Krishna) who came in the early part of the Dark Age, and not in the late part, as Christ did.

THE LIFE OF THE REAL JESUS ENSHROUDED IN MYSTERY

Now noting all we have said previously in this introduction, it does not require a great effort of deduction to arrive at a fairly strong supposition that the birth story of Jesus was adapted from other religions, and therefore, taking the passages just quoted into account, it seems likely that clairvoyant research may prove correct. But if this be the case, it is very far from explicit as to details, though it clearly asserts that the father of Jesus was not a carpenter ; a statement which immediately implies that we can hope to obtain no data from the actual *Gospel* stories at all, respecting this important event of the birth (1). Indeed, there is very good reason to infer that even the birth-place of Jesus itself was only supposed to be Nazareth, through the fact that Jesus dressed as a Nazarene ; the Nazarenes being a sect, and not the inhabitants of Nazareth. Nor must we fail to add, that research in other directions goes to strengthen the assertions of clairvoyance, for if we read that erudite work of Mr. G. R. S. Mead entitled *Did Jesus Live* 100 *B.C.* ? we find so much evidence for the contention (though it is not actually proved) that we are compelled to attach more weight to clairvoyant statements than otherwise we might have done. But unfortunately the more we probe into the

(1) There have been, it is said, no less than 136 different dates fixed for the birth-date of Jesus by different Christian sects.

matter the more do we find the life of the real Jesus to be enshrouded in mystery, even to the extent of his actual name, which seems to have been not Jesus, but Jehoshua (1) or even one not beginning with J at all. In short, we are at every turn brought face to face with the humiliating reflection embodied in the paradox : ' The more we learn the less we know '. And yet even here again we find the true signs of the Adept, for such Great Ones usually contrive to live in such a manner as to attract the least possible attention in the public world ; some even going so far as to prohibit their disciples from revealing the fact that they were Adepts at all.

MYTHS TRUER IN ONE SENSE THAN HISTORY

What course can we adopt, then, in writing a story of Jesus of Nazareth, and indeed why do we write a story at all, it may be asked ? And the first question we will proceed to answer, while the second will be dealt with in the concluding section. There is in fact only one course we *can* adopt, and that is the portrayal of a character based upon *psychological* truth rather than historical : but not merely on psychological, but also on spiritual truth ; on that form of Verity which is in one sense far truer than history, for it is eternal. In other words, our attempt will be to portray the *spirit* of this sublime Adept—and hence all Adepts from

(1) See *Life of Jehoshua*, by Franz Hartmann, M.D. (Kegan Paul).

time immemorial up to the present day—and not the historical letter of his life. For we are reminded of a saying of Alfred de Vigny, where he states that myth and legend may be regarded as more true than history itself, because legend recounts not acts which are often incomplete and abortive, but the genius itself of great men and great nations.

And yet, although the *Gospels* may have in their original form been true from this latter standpoint, yet as we read them to-day they have lost (as already pointed out at considerable length) their consistency—though *St John* is largely an exception to the other three. And why? Because John is the only writer who does not portray the agony of Jesus in Gethsemane, a point of very considerable importance as we shall come to see. For whereas the other three *Gospels* tell, esoterically speaking, the life-story of every Initiate into the mysteries, being also a presentation of a great Solar Myth (1), John, on the other hand, in that he omits certain factors and stages which go to complete the Initiation-story, presents us with a fundamentaly different conception, though the details in part are not lacking in similitude. Indeed, to the ordinary reader, the Jesus of *John* and the Jesus of *Matthew*, *Luke*, and *Mark*, are apparently the same person with a few details omitted in his portrayal, but to him who knows how to search, something highly significant comes to light, for John's *Gospel* is the only one of the four which

(1) Anybody can convince himself of this if he will read *Esoteric Christianity*, by Annie Besant.

depicts Jesus as a full-fledged Adept, or one who has attained to Christhood—Christhood and Adeptship being synonymous. In other words, *John* is psychologically correct, while the others respecting this particular point are noteworthily incorrect; *for they depict the life-story of one who has yet to* attain *but refer to him all the time as if he* had attained.

JOHN THE ONLY CONSISTENT 'BIOGRAPHER'

St John's *Gospel* then, is the biography of an Adept who lived and preached and was executed, appearing afterwards in his subtle body to his disciples as all Adepts do, while the other three Gospels are the biographical allegories of a man who was not an Adept, but who is depicted as going through the various stages and ordeals necessary to *become* an Adept eventually—the last ordeal, prior to the complete union of the soul with the All Soul, being 'the Agony of Gethsemane'. But this will become clearer if we compare some of these ordeals and initiatiory emblems; for we have the 'Virgin Birth', and then the Temptation, both of which are distinct stages in spiritual evolution, as understood esoterically, and both of which are omitted in John's *Gospel*; then we have the Agony scene, as just stated, and also the Agony on the cross, both of which are again omitted by John. And why? for the answer is very significant; being none other than the fact *that the Adept who has attained Christhood (or Samadhi) is beyond all temptation and suffering, physical*

or mental, and therefore, even if nailed to a cross, can so detach his consciousness (1) from his bodily vehicle as to feel no pain whatsoever. And thus John's *Gospel*, although it may contain a good many errors, having suffered mutilation at the hands of copyists and translators, yet psychologically it is the most consistent : for it omits those very factors which prove that Jesus was not an Adept ; namely, *suffering in all forms*, which is quite inconsistent with that unconditional Bliss ; the property and ever-present consciousness of the true Yogi.

THE POSSIBILITY BUT IMPROBABILITY OF CERTAIN MIRACLES

But the foregoing is not intended to imply that in writing our life of Jesus we would solely use St John's *Gospel ;* on the contrary we have used every source from which likely stories and incidents might be collected. Nor would this be a matter of surprise if it were more widely known, how, out of the large quantity of Gospels relative to the Christ-Jesus story, the ' Authentic ' ones came to be selected, for the method used was hardly better than that pertaining to a lottery. But it should be added that we have not *invented* incidents, and that every one embodied in our story is taken from one source or another, though *The Aquarian Gospel*, to which, as it will be seen we often refer our readers,

(1) A friend tells us, that his Master, in order to show what true concentration is, has allowed his pupils to stick pins into the most sensitive part of his body.

is modern, though taken down by clairvoyant means from the Akashic Records (1). *The Gospel of the Holy Twelve* on the other hand, to which we also refer, purports to be one of the earliest Christian fragments preserved in Thibet: and certainly if its wealth of beautiful incident and detail is a criterion, then one may say its preservation has been effectively secured. That both the *Aquarian Gospel*, as also the latter, are full of deep spiritual truths, we can state without reservation: but that they are both historical is open to doubt, seeing they differ in numerous points.

And here we would mention the difference between the possibility and *probability* of wonder-working on the part of Jesus; for that any real Adept could perform all or any one of those miracles which Jesus performed, we have no reason to doubt, but whether He *would* perform them is another matter: indeed, the Yogi who indulges in wonder-working to any considerable extent stamps himself immediately as one who has not attained to the very highest, strange though the statement may sound. For although Patanjali in the celebrated Yoga *Aphorisms* enumerates the Siddhis, as they are called, and devotes a whole section to them, yet the student is warned at the same time that to seek their attainment is merely to run after pleasures in a subtle form, instead of in the gross form known as the pleasures of the senses. And so this being the case, we have omitted the narrative of certain miracles of Jesus, because we do not

(1) *i.e.*, The Memory of Nature.

consider them consistent with the exalted degree to which He had attained, for one thing, and for another, some of them as related in the *Gospels* do not ring true. For instance that Jesus could teach Peter to walk on the water (1) is possible, but if the incident had ever occurred, why should Peter have been in such terror of sinking? Is it conceivable for a moment that a fisherman who plied his craft on such a treacherous lake as Galilee, should be unable to swim? We are therefore in some, if not in all instances, constrained to adopt the interpretation of that enlightened seer, the Rev Todd-Ferrier—namely, that the stories of the miracles are allegories full of the deepest mystical symbolism (*The Master*).

A RATIONAL CONCEPTION OF THE VIRGIN-BIRTH

But in addition to the miracles, there are one or two points of importance that should be mentioned, together with the interpretation put upon them by some schools of occultism. For to begin with, the Virgin-Birth story, we find in that *Gospel of the Holy Twelve* and, in Section II headed 'The Immaculate Conception of Jesus Christ', that Mary received a message from an 'angel' (or in modern language we should say

(1) By conquering the current called Udana (the name of the nerve-current which governs the lungs) the Yogi does not sink in the water, or in swamps, he can walk on thorns and also can die at will. Patanjali, Aph. 40. It may be related, however, that when a disciple of Buddha used this faculty for crossing a river, his Master rebuked him soundly for 'showing off' and not crossing by the bridge.

'a spirit-entity') to the effect that she was to conceive and bear a son of the Highest—to which she answers: 'How can that be so, seeing I know no man'? To which the 'angel' replies that the 'Holy Spirit' shall come upon Joseph her spouse—giving her at the same time sundry directions as to diet and so forth. Nor does the 'angel' fail to go to Joseph, telling him to perform the act of procreation and adding the words: 'Blessed art thou among men and blessed *be the fruit of thy loin*'. Thus in viewing these pages, there can be no doubt that, however immaculate in the sense of purity the conception was, it was *not miraculous* as the Churches have maintained. And if we turn to Max Heindl's *Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* we find a very rational exposition of the so-called immaculate conception; for this writer informs us (and I think correctly) that high Initiates in the Essenian Community, although married, observed the most rigid continence, never performing the sexual act for the gratification of the senses. In other words, both Mary and Joseph were 'virgins,' and the virgin-birth implies nothing more than this fact in its physical sense—though in its mystical sense it implies something of an entirely different nature, having no connection with historical persons whatever, as already stated.

THE TEMPTATION, AND PATANJALI

So much then for the Virgin-Birth idea, but what are we to make of the second important event in

the chronicles of Jesus, namely the Temptation? And here again we need only turn to Yoga for an explanation of that puzzling episode, seeing that both Shuré in his book, *Jesus, The Last Great Initiate,* or Hartmann, in the *Life of Jehoshua,* adopt the rational idea that the 'Temptation' was one of the great tests the neophyte had to go through ere he could attain the highest Initiation. Moreover, we have in the Yoga *Aphorisms* (Patanjali) the statement that only he who renounces the Acquisition of the Powers (Siddhis) can achieve Liberation; a statement which is particularly significant, seeing that 'Satan' is made to tempt Jesus to use *powers* for His own welfare: namely, to turn stones into bread. Again we find in *Aphorism* 52 of Patanjali the following sentence: 'The Yogi should not feel flattered or tempted by the overtures of celestial beings—for fear of relapsing into evil'. And yet was not 'Satan' also a flatterer, and obviously the impersonification of those Lords of the Dark Face, as they are called, who work for the acquisition of personal selfish power, instead of for the good of the race?

THE TRANSFIGURATION

And finally we come to that spectacle of the higher and more subtle Body of the Adept, only perceptible to the *psychic* sight, and so imposing in its beauty as to fill any of its spectators with reverence and awe in a way the physical body, however majestic, can never do. And that this

Transfiguration of Jesus could be nothing but this —leaving any more symbolical meaning aside— must be obvious to any person gifted with clairvoyant faculties. Indeed, the incident goes to show that, on that occasion, the disciples were enabled to reach a plane of consciousness more exalted perhaps than on any previous one they had succeeded in doing, so that they ' saw ' Jesus communing with other Beings of surpassing purity and power : a vision possible to any person nowadays who is at a sufficiently high stage of spiritual evolution to receive the required initiation. For the rationale of man's subtler bodies, however, we must refer the reader to theosophical literature, which has done much to put forward in a scientific way the higher aspects of so-called ' Spiritualism ' —since the subject is far too vast and involved to allow of treatment here. Suffice it to say, that *interpenetrating* the gross physical body, there are bodies composed of finer grades of matter, and so subtle, as not to be perceptible to the ordinary untrained physical eyes. And these bodies vary in beauty according to the rarity of the matter of which they are composed. To class them one and all as ' spirits ', as many unscientific and pseudo occultists do, however, is erroneous and leads to the utmost confusion, for it implies, the person to whom they belong, so to say, has already abandoned the physical world—a fact which is often untrue. Indeed, the Adept possesses the power to function in any one of these bodies, or better said, vehicles of consciousness, while

his dense physical envelope is entranced or asleep, or even on the contrary fully awake; so that, whereas the Adept 'himself' may be, let us say, in America, yet nevertheless he can appear to a person, or number of persons, in England or elsewhere if he so chooses; especially if they be gifted with psychic sight.

And in connection with this, we would say a word concerning the Ascension, for leaving aside its symbolic meaning, it is not by any means unlikely that Jesus appeared to his disciples on this occasion in one of his subtle bodies; a thing many an Adept does, as just stated. Indeed, the appearance to the men at Emmaus and other appearances previous to the 'Ascension' would seem, as depicted in the Gospels, to be obviously of this nature. But if we read Anna Kingsford's account of the matter, obtained clairvoyantly, in her *Clothed with the Sun*, we find that she shows that what has been transformed or exaggerated into the so-called Ascension was a perfectly ordinary occurrence; for Jesus, never having died on the cross, remained for some time in the seclusion of Joseph's house, together with some of his disciples; after which he became a hermit, taking only John with him into his solitude. As to the final scene we read: 'I see him (Jesus) bidding his followers goodbye. It is only a hill which he ascends, and he disappears from their view, lost in a cloud or mist. He now becomes a hermit. I see him in the wilderness alone: and there he attains the higher life, which constitutes his true ascension.'

She later on, however, refers to him as dictating to John, which implies that this his ' beloved ' disciple subsequently joined him.

Nor does this description of necessity clash with the theosophical interpretation (also arrived at through clairvoyance), for the theory (?) is that the great Adept who used the body of the man Jesus, did so for a period of three years only, so that by this time (1) He would have returned it to its owner —strange though the statement may sound.

THE CRUCIFIXION AND THE OVERCOMING OF DEATH

And yet, although it will be seen from the foregoing what our interpretation of the crucifixion is likely to be, nevertheless a few words may be added concerning this so highly significant event. And to begin with, we may allude to the incident of the spear, and how one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side, so that ' forthwith came there out blood and water '. Now as every physician knows (and as Fielding Hall in *The World Soul* has pointed out) blood cannot flow from a corpse, and yet according to *St John*, Jesus was dead previous to this incision ; so that we are compelled to the conclusion that the story in question does not ' ring true ' as a historical fact. But even granted Jesus was not dead already, if we turn to Anna Kingsford's clairvoyant researches we find that His heart was not pierced by the spear-

(1) According to Anna Kingsford, Jesus was about 50 when he became a hermit.

point, and therefore there was no cause for death to ensue. Nor must we fail to remember that the comparatively short time Jesus remained on the cross was not sufficient to cause death, seeing that in the case of the two thieves it had not done so, and the soldiers were compelled to ' brake the legs of the first and the other ' in order, we suppose, to bring this about. Thus what is likely to have happened at the crucifixion is apparent to the occultist, however unapparent it may be to the layman, for it is obvious that Jesus went into Samadhi or superconscious trance ; a state which to the uninitiated soldiers would *appear* as death, though in reality it might be termed exactly the reverse. And the more is ' this ' likely to be the case, seeing that Jesus used the very words which describe God-consciousness, or Union with the All-Father ; the highest Samadhi being none other than this, as already shown (1).

But there is another point to which it is essential to allude ; namely, the expression often placed in the mouth of Jesus referring to the *overcoming of death* : for this expression is a highly significant one to the Yogi or occultist. Indeed, the occult books and the Indian works on Yoga constantly make use of the phrase, as the following examples will show, whether they be the exact words employed by Jesus or not. For in the third chapter of the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, we read : ' Maha Mudra, Maha Bandha, Maha Vedha, etc.' these are the Mudras which *destroy old-age and death.* And further

(1) We have adopted this interpretation in our story.

we read : ' To him who knows the Khechari Mudra there is no disease, *death*, intellectual torpor, sleep, hunger, thirst. He who knows the Khechari Mudra is not affected by any malady, neither is he affected by any Karma, and Time has no power over him '. And again we read : ' He who constantly practises Uddiyana Bandha as taught by his Guru (Master) . . . even though he be old, becomes (like one) young . . . and he conquers death without doubt in six months '.

It will be seen then, from the foregoing, that the possibility of overcoming death was by no means a thing unknown prior to the time of Jesus, for the books which refer to this highly occult fact long ante-date the Adept of Galilee ; though the particular Sanscrit book from which we quote may not be one of great antiquity, being a compilation of the sayings and exercises taken from the ancient sacred books. And yet it will be asked ' What is this overcoming of death ? ' ; for some explanation is undoubtedly necessary, seeing the claim such a statement makes upon our credulity is very considerable. Nor does the commentary attached to the book in question fail to furnish that explanation, since it states—the destroying of death means that the Yogi acquires the power to *die at will* ; though here again the statement needs some qualification. And this by reason of the fact that it possesses a twofold significance, one being mystical and the other physical. As to the latter, it unequivocally means that the Yogi has gained such perfect control over the physical organism,

that he can prevent the gradual wearing out of the body; thus putting off death almost indefinitely if he so chooses; for as Swami Vivekananda says: 'The Yogi at 150 years of age has not even a grey hair', while it is well known amongst the occultists that one Adept living at the present time has retained the same physical body for some 300 years. And yet, although this be the case, the overcoming of death, as already said, means more than merely retaining the body for a period far outstretching the normal three score years and ten, for the word Death in mystical parlance often refers to the *limited* consciousness of ordinary physical existence in contradistinction to the *absolute* consciousness of the highest Samadhi known as Mukta. Indeed, when the Yogi has achieved this state, he is beyond death as we normally understand it, and if he to outward appearance dies, then it is merely that he *chooses* to withdraw a portion of his consciousness from one particular physical body, so that the latter no longer functions, and so falls into decay. In other words he is no longer the slave of death, but the master of it; nor yet is he the slave of Karma, but absolutely free, as the word Mukta implies.

It will be seen then that the paramount importance attached by the Christian Church to the overcoming of death on the part of Jesus, arises here again from ignorance of Yoga; an ignorance which engendered the erroneous supposition that the Great Prophet of Nazareth was the only Being in history who

achieved so mighty a feat. And yet the author has no hesitation in saying that there exist Adepts at the present day who have overcome the 'great enemy', and who exist as living embodiments of the Yogic statement that 'a Yogi in Samadhi is not destroyed by death, nor influenced by good or bad Karma, nor affected by anything done against him to destroy him'. Which latter clause brings us back to the crucifixion itself; for presupposing that, as St John relates, the attempt was made to destroy Jesus by means of a spear that attempt certainly failed, and in the course of a short time Jesus emerged from his trance utterly unhurt, save for a few scars; the wounds which caused those scars having apparently healed up in a remarkably short span of time.

Nevertheless, ere leaving this section, a word should be added in connection with the 'exercises' for the 'overcoming of death' quoted from the Sanskrit work in question: for to suppose that any man in the street need only perform a certain feat every day for the space of six months in order to become young again, though already old, would be largely to adopt a fallacy. Indeed, as the text states, these exercises have to be learnt from the Guru; and let it here be specially re-emphasised (see *ante*) that the Guru only imparts these secrets when the student has earned the right through the manifestation of very special qualifications to receive them. In other words, he must have passed through many severe tests, ere his master will entrust him with the particular knowledge which

brings about such far-reaching results; and even when the knowledge has been imparted, the practices themselves demand an almost abnormal degree of courage, steadfastness, self-abnegation and will-power on the part of the student. For, as the text further states: 'Siddhis (abnormal powers) are not obtained by wearing the dress of a Yogi, or by talking about them, but untiring practice is alone the secret of success—there is no doubt about this'. Moreover, there is the further point to be noted, that if Yoga be practised wrongly, and independent of the supervision of a competent teacher, the results accruing may be either insanity, or at best the utter ruination of the nervous system for life.

THE CRUCIFIXION AS SACRIFICE

But to turn to the sacrificial aspect of the crucifixion (and we deal with it here rather from a sense of completeness than from any weightier reason) it will be patent to all our readers that the sacrifice which Jesus is supposed to have made by allowing Himself to be executed is not one of such gigantic dimensions as the Church has implied. Nay, when all is said, looking at the matter from the most orthodox point of view, if it were possible to save the whole world from perdition by being crucified, there would hardly be wanting persons of a far lower grade of spiritual evolution than Jesus, to offer themselves as martyrs for such a momentous cause. Indeed, many a soldier at the Front has suffered worse and longer agonies, solely

from motives of patriotism, than did the Prophet of Nazareth, so that purely from the sacrificial aspect the crucifixion has been greatly exaggerated, as also, we believe, greatly misunderstood.

And yet here again, the Theosophical School and the Rosicrucian School of Heindel have much to put forward that is of interest; for they hold that the state of Adeptship is by no means of necessity the limit of spiritual altitude, and that there exist Beings in the scale of evolution far higher even than Adepts. In other words, there are Beings who do not belong to the evolution of the earth-planet at all, but of a far more advanced one; and thus, according to Max Heindel, it was an Entity of this type who 'descended' to our Earth-plane in order to give an immense spiritual impetus to our humanity. Now looked at from an occult standpoint, this would indeed involve a sacrifice of tremendous magnitude, for the cramping conditions of our plane would prove a spiritual torture—if the phrase be permitted—to a Being who had long transcended them or else never dwelt in them at all.

The sacrifice made by Christ, then, according to these schools, was not the suffering involved through crucifixion and the resultant loss of the physical body (supposing He did lose it by the process) but one of a far vaster order. That the idea of sacrifice has crept into the dogmas of the Church therefore, is not altogether to be wondered at, but that this idea should have become attached in an erroneous way has of course put another

and far less sublime face upon the matter altogether. For, unfortunately, the Church has permitted the notion to come into being, that sacrifice is *in itself* a painful thing, whereas such is by no means the case, and only becomes so when divorced from Love. And so it is that the psychology of the Church is at fault by reason of its apparent inability to take this immeasurable Love-consciousness of the Christ into account, and the gladness of sacrifice resultant therefrom instead of its antithesis. True it is, Christianity talks much about the Love of its Founder, but it allows its conception of Him to be inconsistent with its 'holding forth', and, as will be enlarged upon in our next section, transforms Him into a Being who had ever before Him the sorrowful and almost lachrymose consciousness of the sacrifice He was making for His fellowmen, instead of the gladness which every true Adept must feel who is engaged on the sublime Love-Mission of furthering the spiritual evolution of the human race.

We may still, however, add a few words in this connection, seeing the Theosophical School puts forward some further points of interest; for, as already stated, this Society of genuine Seekers maintains that the man Jesus lent his body for the space of three years to the very High Entity alluded to; a procedure which, however great an honour, involved also a certain sacrifice, especially if the body came to be executed as a result—an outcome which the Theosophists imply. They, in fact, state that the 'appearances' to the Disciples

after the crucifixion were brought about in the subtle body, and were not physical visitations at all (1)—at least so is our reading of the case. Further, the Theosophists furnish the interesting information that the man Jesus reincarnated later as that remarkable Sage and wonder-worker, Apollonius of Tyana, and that at the present time he is again in incarnation, and living in seclusion in the Hills of Lebanon; being known to his disciples and students of certain schools of occultism as Master Jesus. As to that august Being, who some 2,000 years ago appeared as the Christ, we learn from the same source that He is likely shortly to appear again in the world of men—and once more to give a great spiritual impetus to the Human Race.

THREE ENIGMATICAL UTTERANCES OF JESUS

It merely remains now to mention three utterances to be found in the New Testament and supposed to have proceeded from the mouth of Jesus: though any person who has given the matter honest and unprejudiced thought must see that as they stand these utterances are inconsistent with spiritual logic. And to deal with the Lord's Prayer first, it is almost inconceivable that for centuries millions of people have repeated this prayer and yet—as is evidently the case—have never troubled or dared to question its real meaning or, in part, absence of

(1) We think it only fair to allude to this theosophical interpretation in our Argument, though we have adopted the other one in our story; viz. that Jesus did not die on the cross.

meaning. And I especially allude to the sentences 'lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil'; for to put it in homely language, would an All-loving Heavenly Father lead his children into temptation at all, or if so, would He do so for any other purpose than to teach them to overcome such temptation? And yet if the latter, does it behove anyone to beg the Heavenly Father to refrain from doing that which is for their good? That something is wrong with these utterances later seers have seen; and the Lord's Prayer, as it stands in *The Gospel of The Holy Twelve*, and again as it stands in the Rev. Todd Ferrier's book *The Logia or Sayings of The Master* is highly instructive. To quote the former first, we find it runs: Our Father-Mother Who art above and within: Hallowed be Thy sacred Name in twofold Trinity.— In Wisdom, Love and Equity Thy Kingdom come to all. Thy will be done, As in Heaven so in Earth. Give us day by day to partake of Thy holy Bread and the fruit of the living Vine. As Thou dost forgive us our trespasses so may we forgive others who trespass against us. Shew upon us Thy goodness, that to others we may shew the same. In the hour of temptation, deliver us from evil. For Thine are the Kingdom, the Power and The Glory: From the Ages of ages, NOW, and to the Ages of ages. Amen'.

It will be seen in this version that there is no mention of 'leading us *not* into temptation', nor yet of any *request* that our sins should be forgiven us; for he who realises what are the attributes

of the Heavenly Father would know such a request was superfluous, in that the very essence of Love is unlimited forgiveness. But we will now quote the Rev. Todd-Ferrier's version, which runs :

Our Father-Mother in the Heavens, most hallowed be Thy Name unto us :

May Thy Kingdom come within us.

Thy Will be accomplished by us : even as it is done within Thy Heavens, so be it accomplished upon the Earth :

Give us Thyself the daily portion of the Bread of Life.

Forgive us our sins, and help us as we pass through to forgive others.

Amid the great trial lead us, that evil overtake us not.

For the Kingdom within us is Thine, with its power and its glory, even for evermore.

Thou art the Arche and the Amen.

Now certainly these two versions of the Lord's Prayer are highly significant when looked at from the Yoga standpoint and especially the two sentences to which we have already drawn attention. For it will be seen that both versions deal with ordeals, or an ordeal, through which the soul has inevitably to pass, and which we are constrained to regard as being similar or identical to those temptations alluded to in the Aphorism of Patanjali already quoted in this Introduction. The disciple then is taught to pray, *not* that the Divine Parent (more mystically, spiritually and logically termed the Father-Mother in these versions) should refrain

from leading him into temptation, but that He should lead him, and others, safely *through* temptation, or all those temptations which lie along the Road, and which may be called collectively *the great Trial*, as the disciple journeys to the Final Goal of Liberation. It is true that as regards the forgiveness of sins, the Rev. Todd-Ferrier's version voices a request on the part of the disciple, but such elements of the personal relationship between God and man are to be found on the Path of Bhakti or Devotion in contradistinction to the Path of Gnana Yoga, or the Philosophical Path, and are consistent from their own standpoint, though apparently contradictory to the latter.

And this brings us secondly to the question of the ' Unpardonable Sin ', which has proved such a puzzle to theologians, and engendered such thousands of text-torturing sermons, treatises and commentaries. And I allude to that obscure text in Mark III, 28-29 (1) which runs : ' Verily I say unto you, all their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men and their blasphemies wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme. But who shall, however, blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin '.

Now it is self-evident to all unprejudiced minds that there must be something radically amiss with this supposed utterance as presented in the *Gospels*, but as to an explanation dealing with the question *how* such a text came into being, for this we are indebted to the enlightened mind and pen

(1) See also *Matthew* XII. 31-52.

of Mr William Loftus Hare, who wrote his conclusions in an article which appeared in *The Vahan* for April 1, 1919. Now he points out that the Greek word *aphiemi* (rendered forgive) equals 'to send forth', 'to discharge': he further points out that in classical Greek the word *blasphemes* has no special theological significance but means 'to speak ill of', or 'to the prejudice of one'; thus the noun *blasphemis* simply means 'slander'. There is, however, he further states, a confusion between 'to blaspheme' and to 'speak against' (in Matthew's version) for *eipein logon kata*, means to speak a word of magical power over against or down upon some spiritual entity; thus it is not equivalent to blasphemy but is of the nature of exorcism. He next deals with the word 'sin' (hamartia) which has to be understood in the sense of a state of corruption, an infestation; thus it is not an act; acts of sin or sins being called *hamartemata;* these proceeding from men who have in them the corruption which is their source. And finally, he deals with the word 'spirit' (in Hebrew *ruati* and in Greek *pneuma*, both of which originally meant breath), for as the New Testament shows, spirit was regarded as the innermost life of man, and could be either good or bad. Thus there are evil spirits, and there is a holy spirit, the latter being identified with the Divine, and said to be communicable to men. So much, then, for the four significant words: but there is yet another point which Mr Loftus Hare emphasises; namely, that the Semitic people, no less than the other races,

constantly thought and spoke in spiritistic terms, even diseases being attributed to the agency of evil spirits, as the various passages in the New Testament clearly indicate. Nor does Mr Loftus Hare fail to give a number of convincing examples with the amended rendering of the crucial words ; though the reader is advised to study the article for himself, it being sufficient for our present purpose to quote the actual passage around which so much controversy has raged. Thus we find it paraphrased : ' Therefore, I truly say to you that all sin and blasphemy can be sent forth (1) from the sons of men, no matter how much they may have sinned. And if anyone (being possessed by the Spirit which is holy) should speak a word over against (2) a man ; it will be sent forth from him. But whosoever should speak a word against the spirit which is holy, it will not be sent forth—no, neither in this age nor in that to come (*Matthew* XII, 31-32. *Mark* III, 28-29). In a word we may put it that although sin, evil spirits, and bewitchments, may be expelled from men, yet the Divine spirit in man can never be expelled, for that is eternal.

It will be seen then—if we accept the amendments of Mr Loftus Hare (and the writer has no hesitation in so doing) that there is no mention whatever of an unpardonable sin or eternal sin. Indeed, how can any errors or sins be eternal, seeing that only Reality is eternal ? All the same, no honest thinker can accept the untenable doctrine that because sins are pardoned, their consequences are

(1) Or expelled. (2) We might render this ' cast a spell ',

immediately annihilated on the relative plane. If two men engage in a fight, for instance, and considerably bruise each other in the process, should they, having 'had enough of it' elect to cry *pax* and forgive one another, the act of forgiving would not instantaneously heal their bruises.

And finally we come to that text which the Roman Catholic Church has interpreted as an excuse for a refusal to grant a divorce, even when two parties are living together in discord, or the one is confined for life in an asylum or a convict's cell. Thus in the sentence 'Whom God hath joined, let no man put asunder' the Roman Church has arrogated to itself the position and office of God: forgetting that when the utterance was made, no such Church existed, and that such an interpretation is quite out of keeping with the general tone of Jesus' teachings. Now, as the author is by no means the first to point out, this saying must have a far nobler and deeper significance, which is perfectly apparent from a scrutiny of another biblical text: viz., that God is Love. Nay, we may boldly state the truth that the whole Universe is evolved from and held together by Love or the great Law of Attraction, so that the sentence surely bears the following interpretation: those who are united in a noble and perfect Love no person should attempt to separate. For Love if it be not the whole of God, is at any rate a part of God, and therefore to attempt to destroy that which is of God must be accounted a sin in His eyes. It is true, however, that the Roman Church has another text to uphold

it : namely, that Jesus said anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery : but if we face facts we must realise that Jesus never implied that adultery was an unforgiveable sin or by any means the worst of sins, since He confessed his preference for harlots and sinners rather than Pharisees. Again, it must be noted that His saying which permitted a man to ' put away his wife ' because of unfaithfulness is quite contradictory to another saying which requires a man to forgive even unto seventy times seven ; for to put away is emphatically *not* to forgive. But there is yet another point which has been persistently overlooked, and that is the fact that Jesus was giving these exalted teachings to his disciples and not to the masses. For in *Matthew* V, 1 (1) the verse runs : ' Seeing the multitude of people, Jesus went up into the Hill (*i.e.*, to escape the multitudes) and when His disciples came to Him, He proceeded to teach them (His disciples).' Thus it is obvious these teachings were never intended for the masses, but for those candidates who aspired to take the Kingdom of Heaven by force : that is as the whole of this introduction implies ; those who aspired to become students of Yoga. That the Roman Church will deny this is obvious, but will it also deny that it countenances prisons and hangmen and other species of legal revenge which absolutely go against the commands to ' turn the other cheek ' and resist not evil ? And yet if it countenances these and forgives a man his other sins, absolving him there-

(1) Weymouth's translation.

from, it must with any pretence to logic forgive him adultery also. Nay, this it even does, provided the adulterer has not the decency to marry the woman with whom he has sinned, and so do what is termed the honourable thing. Strange spiritual logic!

THE REASON FOR THE STORY

And thus at length I come to lay bare the object I have in writing a story of Jesus of Nazareth at all—for I am well aware that to the orthodox I shall appear lacking in humility if indeed nothing worse. And yet, when all is said, there is in man an impelling force which may not be withstood, seeing any attempt to withstand it is at once to be untrue to one's highest self—and at the same time, wrap up, as it were, the parabolic talent in a napkin; a procedure which, when rendered into plain language, means nothing more than the wasting of opportunities, or discarding the finer impulses of the mind. For the truth is—and I say it in all modesty—I feel myself impelled to supply a certain need of the present age; a certain portrayal of the immortal Nazarene, which shall rid the mind of all those misconceptions concerning His life which I have enumerated in this preface. Indeed, just as for me, the story of Jesus the Christ has been well-nigh ruined by the gloomy associations which all the paraphernalia of sacerdotalism have woven around it, so must there be others who find themselves in the same plight. Nay, when I come to think

of the travesty which the Church has made of this sublime Personality ; the Church with its innumerable black-clothed parsons droning out the exalted maxims of the inner life until they become but vain repetitions,—am I not compelled to realise that the very thought of Christianity must, for thousands of people, have become a nightmare of gloom and sentimentality and sickliness ? Not that for a moment I would imply there are no high-souled and noble and heroic parsons, who neither—to use two vulgarisms—'put on side' nor 'pull the long face', and who are not lacking either in heartfulness or intellectuality, but devote their lives to altruism and philanthropy. But taking all this into account, there is no denying that a large proportion of the clergy can barely be regarded as the epitome of spirituality, seeing they are steeped in bigotry and intolerance, and what we may term a certain pious stupidity, utterly at variance with the teachings of Jesus, or any Initiate, who has, or ever will, grace the physical plane.

And yet what else is to be expected from a party of men who regard their great Example as 'the Man of Sorrows' ; and this in spite of the number of spiritual seers and seeresses who from time to time have appeared to dispel this view. For the clergy conveniently manage to forget when confronted with any new spiritual genius that 'by their fruits ye shall know them' ; and so, in spite of the gradual emptying of the churches, they utterly refuse to alter their ways and make changes which shall comply with the spiritual needs of the

Age. It therefore falls on the occultist to provide what the priests and clergy fail to do; and so, with the help of the various books referred to in this foreword, I, as a student of occultism, set out to write a story, which if it accomplishes nothing else, may, I hope, bring to a few a widow's mite of enlightenment and a little Peace.

THE STORY

I

There is, to the north of Arabia, and bounded by the Mediterranean on the west, a land of verdure and flowers and beauty and colour, where for ten long months of the year, a resplendent sun, planted in an unfathomable turquoise oversea, rays forth its magical brilliance on stretches of desert, on mountains and valleys, on lakes and forests, and on every variety of Nature's loveliness. For it is as if the Deity had reflected, when projecting the Universe from out His infinite Heart: 'I will take one small corner of the world: and will concentrate therein all the possibilities of My powers in the way of beauty; for I will show grandeur and majesty, in the form of high mountains, and austerity in the form of wasteland and deserts, and bountifulness in the form of the richest profusion of flowers and fruits, and gracefulness in the form of hillside curves and meandering streamlets, and energy in the form of rushing torrents and seas breaking forth into sudden storms: and over all this blending of qualities I will pour the light of My Sun-body in a radiant Blessing of warmth and peace, calling forth in response as it were, every

variety of colour and shade and hue, so that mankind will marvel for evermore.' And here, almost in the heart of this beauty-intoxicated country, and in an abandoned corner of a quarter named Galilee, rests a village of such exquisite comeliness, that one well might say the very semblance of a dream of some little sequestered recess of heaven had fallen to earth in a hollow on the mountain side: for its houses, rising in tiers under the rock, resemble white cubes, scattered about in a forest of pomegranate, vine and fig-trees, while around it floats the pure mountain air, in which innumerable doves are to be seen hovering against the limpid blue firmament, and the clear horizon of the Galilean sea far away to the east.

Now it so happened by the decrees of Destiny, that in this sequestered spot of rural sweetness, there lived a Galilean woman of noble origin who was an initiate of the Essenian Brotherhood, as was also Joseph her husband—a master carpenter by trade: but although these two were wedded in the eyes of men, yet, because of the rules of the Essenian brotherhood, they led a life of absolute continence, knowing nothing of the passions of the body but only the emotions of the soul. And thus it came about by reason of ardent practice and long tuition under the Essenian masters, that they both developed clairvoyant and other occult faculties, being thus enabled to commune with disembodied entities and beings of the angel-evolution, as all initiates of a high degree can do; seeing that psychic sight is latent in everyone, and only needs,

by steadfast practice, following on the necessary qualifications, to be brought into manifestation. And so, as Mary one day was engrossed in her meditations, she perceived with her inner vision an entity, one Gabriel, of the angel-evolution, standing, as it were before her in the radiance of his own sphere. And he said to her: Know, O Mary, thou art highly favoured, for Motherhood is about to come upon thee, and a great One shall be the fruit of thy womb. And yet, seeing as I do, thou art distressed and puzzled, have no fear, and banish thy scruples, for thou and thy husband are to be the instruments of the White Brotherhood of Adepts who desire to send another mighty Teacher forth into the world of men. Then said Mary: Nevertheless how can this be, seeing I have never known the embraces of any man, and have lived in absolute chastity with my husband, so following the rules of the brotherhood to which I belong, and which it would ill behove me to disobey. But the angel-figure smiled and answered: Not so, for I am the messenger of Those more august even than the Essenian brothers, and what They decree must not be disobeyed; for know that thou art to provide a body for One who shall come, and who shall some day be called The Christ in that He will show the way of attainment to the great child humanity, and so save the people from their miseries and iniquities, provided they will but follow the spirit of His law. But know further, before I depart, that what I have said to thee I will tell also to thy husband, that he may follow the bidding

of the great Ones, and that knowing all I have told thee, thou shalt have no fears when he comes to thee. Nor art thou alone a favoured one, for thy cousin Elizabeth in yonder city among the hills of Judea is already pregnant, and her son shall, at the appointed time, act as harbinger to thy son, seeing that so it has been decreed by the Lords of Destiny. Whereupon having said this, that angel-figure disappeared as suddenly as he had come (*a*).

So then in a little while, it all happened as the angel had foretold, and Mary, having known for the first time the embraces of her husband, became pregnant, and because of her pregnancy became also filled with joy. But as the months went by, and the time was nearly come for Jesus to be born, she yearned to see Elizabeth, her cousin, not only because she loved her, but also because of the great fortune which had come upon them both; so that she resolved, together with Joseph, to set out towards the Judean hills where Elizabeth lived (2). And seeing the way was far, and the journeying slow, and Mary's burden heavy, they were compelled to rest at many places on the way: till at length one evening as they arrived at Bethlehem, the last halting-place on the journey, Mary said: I can go no further, for my son is about to be born. But it so happened that Bethlehem was thronged with travellers going to Jerusalem, so that every inn and homestead was filled with guests, and there was no place anywhere

(*a*) There is nothing irrational in this "appearance", which constantly happens nowadays to people with psychic faculties.

for Joseph and his wife, except in a cave where animals were stabled. Then said Joseph: Seeing we cannot go forward nor yet turn back, there remains nothing but for us to make shift in this cave as best we can. And, so saying, he ministered to the comforts of Mary and prepared for the night. Then lo! at the twelfth hour the promised son was born. And the hands of strangers took the little body and wrapped it in the clothes Mary had prepared, laying it in a trough from which the animals had fed. But meanwhile Joseph saw with his inner vision three figures arrayed in snow-white robes standing before the child, and with his inner ear he heard them say: All Power, Wisdom and Love be thine, Emmanuel.

Now, at the time, certain shepherds belonging to the Essenian brotherhood were on the hill-slopes around Bethlehem, guarding their many flocks of sheep; and by reason of their purity of soul and purpose, they were initiates of a humble degree, as also versed in astrology and other of the occult arts. And seeing they had read the constellations foretelling of the coming of the great World Teacher, they were full of expectancy; for the heavenly signs predicted His advent was near at hand. And so, as they reclined on the grassy slopes, suddenly with their inner eyes they saw, as it were before them, a figure clothed in a spotless white robe, and of such exceeding loveliness that they were filled with awe. But the figure said with a smile of ineffable sweetness: Have no fears, seeing I bring you joyful news, for in a cave at Bethlehem was

born, this twelfth hour, the long awaited One; and that ye may know I speak the truth, go yonder to the village, where ye will find the infant asleep in a manger. So then those shepherds were transported with joy, and it seemed to them as if the very hills were thronged with messengers of song and light, chanting with supernal voices, of Glory and Unity and infinite Peace. But heeding the figure of their vision, and leaving their flocks, they hastened to Bethlehem that they might see and pay homage to the Master that was to be.

And it happened that one of these men was betrothed to a woman, whose home lay near by, and seeing the plight in which Mary and her child were placed, he went, in the morning, to this woman and asked her to prepare a room for their reception; which accordingly she did: so that as soon as Mary was able, she repaired, together with Joseph and the child, to the house where this woman lived, remaining there for many days. But Joseph, on his part, sent a messenger to Elizabeth and Zacharias her husband; telling them all that had occurred, and that their child was born in Bethlehem, whilst they were making the journey from Nazareth to Hebron. And when Elizabeth and Zacharias received the message, they set out almost immediately for Bethlehem, together with their own son, for he had been born some few months previously, and had been called John, by reason of a message from the same angel-figure which had appeared to Joseph and Mary. And so those two families came together in Bethlehem, and Elizabeth tended her

cousin until she could complete the journey to Hebron in the hills of Judea, where was Elizabeth's home: though seeing the unexpected came to pass, that journey was never completed after all. But meanwhile the child was circumcised according to the custom of the Jews; and it was chosen that Jesus should be his name.

2

Now Mary, when her son was forty days old, took him to Jerusalem, in order that there, in the temple, he might be consecrated by the priest, and also that she might offer purifying sacrifices for herself, in the shape of a lamb and two young turtle-doves, according to Jewish rites. And a pious and aged Jew named Simeon was in the temple serving his God; and for many long years he had been looking for One who would be the consolation of Israel, and hoping that he might still live to see Him ere he died; for he was an old sage endowed with much insight and vision, and it had been predicted to him that he should not leave the body until he had beheld the Master in the flesh. And so immediately he saw the infant Jesus, a great realisation suddenly came to his soul, and as he took the little body in his trembling hands to give it his blessing, he was moved to the utterance of prophecy. And he said to Mary and Joseph, with lips that were tremulous with emotion: Behold this child is born for the falling and rising again of many in Israel. And lo! he will bring a sword, but afterwards he will break that sword,

for the sign of the Master is upon him. So saying he gave back the little body to its parents, blessing them with outstretched arms. And then prostrating himself he prayed to the God of his fathers, that now he might be suffered to die in peace, seeing that his eyes had at length beheld the One who was to be the glory of the people of Israel.

And at that moment there was in the temple an aged prophetess named Anna, the daughter of Phannel of the tribe of Aser, for she served her God so constantly in the house of prayer, that she was there well-nigh all day and all night. And seeing what had occurred, and hearing the words of Simeon, and divining the meaning of it all within her own soul, she came forward and exclaimed: Behold Emmanuel, behold the signet cross of the Messiah upon his brow! Whereupon she prostrated herself to worship Him as the incarnation of God. But suddenly there appeared to her inner vision a spirit-entity, and a votary of her own faith: and he said: Pause, good woman and heed what thou doest, since man may not be worshipped, seeing that is idolatry. For this child is man, and the son of man, and although worthy of all praise, yet thou shalt adore God alone; the Divine Essence but not the form; therefore worship the God in this child and not the child itself: whereupon that spirit-entity disappeared. And then that aged prophetess arose and bowed her head: but Mary took the infant Jesus and left the temple (3), and finally returned to Bethlehem.

Now there lived beyond the river Euphrates, certain Magi that were very wise, and by reason of the long practice of austerities were possessed of occult powers, as also a knowledge of the stars, from which they had divined that a master-soul was to be born, for they had seen his astrological sign in the heavens. And among these Magi were three priests, who longed greatly to behold this Adept of the coming age, so much so, that they took costly and symbolic gifts, hastening westwards in search of his home, in order to pay him homage. And one took gold, the symbol of nobility, and another took myrrh, the symbol of power, and another took frankincense, the symbol of wisdom; and setting out with these costly treasures they finally reached Jerusalem and stated their quest. But in that city because of their strange appearance and unusual attire, the inhabitants were much astonished, wondering who they might be and why they had come, for they were not only strange to look upon but imposing as well. And yet, if their appearances were strange, their quest seemed stranger still, seeing they clothed it in poetic and allegorical language, foreign to the understanding of the people; for they asked in every quarter: I pray you tell us, where is the child that was born a king?

And so it inevitably came about that many tongues were set wagging, and stories of all kinds got launched on the impetuous river of daily gossip, having neither beginning nor end, and only the faintest adumbration of truth. Nay, after but a few

days there was such an uproar in the domain of tale-telling, that Herod, getting wind of the matter, sent privately for those three Magi, and invited them to his court. But those Magi, instead of suspecting evil designs on the part of Herod and accordingly keeping their own counsel, unhesitatingly apprised him of the object of their search, telling him, while yet beyond the Euphrates, they had seen a sign in the heavens over the region of Jerusalem, denoting that a Great One was about to be born who should rule the whole earth. So then Herod, failing to understand their metaphor, and confounding the spiritual with the material, grew pale with fear, and thinking perhaps the priests were plotting to restore the kingdom of the Jews, said within himself: Assuredly I must learn more of this child; for unless he be disposed of, who knows but that my kingdom may totter under my very feet? But to the Magi he said: Remain awhile within this city, and I will make enquiries, so that ye may find at length the one whom ye seek, and perhaps we may conduct you to his habitation.

And then those old men, so wise and yet so innocent, were glad, and not a little grateful to Herod, as they took leave of him, returning to their own hostels in another part of the town. But he, on his part, having courteously dismissed them, set about to call a council of all the Jewish masters of law, asking them: What have the Jewish books and prophets to say concerning one who shall come to be king of the Jews? Then said those masters in reply: Micah has written that out of Bethlehem in Judea one shall come forth to rule the people Israel;

and not only Micah, but others have prophesied much to the same effect. So that hearing this, Herod sent again for the Magi, telling them what the Jewish masters had said, and finally requesting them to go and find the child in Bethlehem and bring back word of the success of their quest, that he also might go and honour him. But, then suddenly, as he said this, those Magi from the East read the perfidy in the heart of Herod, and although they held their peace, yet they resolved to warn the parents of the child, when they should find them in Bethlehem. And accordingly they set forth immediately, arriving at their destination that same day, since it was only a journey of a few miles, and, then, after some enquiry and a little trouble, they found the child with its parents, living in the house of a woman as already told. And they found also Elizabeth and Zacharias, with their son, John, waiting to journey back to the hills of Judea with their kinsmen. But on learning this intention, those Magi said to the two families: Go neither home to the hills of Judea, nor yet to Nazareth, but take the two children and make all possible haste to get into Egypt out of the way of harm, for Herod has murderous designs in his heart, and to remain in this country were utterly disastrous and would surely mean death. And Mary said: We will do as you say, for although your words would seem difficult to credit, even if the intention be of the kindliest, yet seeing I have beheld with my inner sight once again the being Gabriel, and he has given me the self-same council, there can

be little doubt that what you say is truth. Nor am I alone in this; for my husband, Joseph, has been warned also.

So then those magian priests, having bestowed their offerings of gold and incense and myrrh, in a few days, went upon their journey homewards; but as to Jerusalem, they sedulously avoided that city, so as to frustrate the designs of Herod the king (5).

3

So, then, at the earliest moment, when Mary was sufficiently restored that she might undertake a long journey, she accordingly set out with her child in the company of her husband, and Elizabeth and the other child John; but Zacharias, being a high priest, and having to officiate in the temple, was compelled to remain behind, for his duties did not permit him to leave for so long his own dwelling-place. And yet, because of this, he came to be murdered, ruthlessly by the guards sent from the king. For in that the Magi failed to return to Herod, that incarnation of apprehension in the form of a monarch, became exceedingly enraged; the more so, as gossips informed him that another child was born in the hills of Judea, who was to go out in advance and prepare the people for the coming of this 'King', as also that the father of this child was none other than Zacharias the priest. Then said Herod in his wrath: I will frustrate the nefarious designs of these infant claimants to my throne, by sending my officers to kill them without

further ado, and if I fail to discover among so many infants those said claimants, I will slay all the children in the regions of Bethlehem whoever they may be. But first, I will dispatch my guards to Zacharias in order to discover the whereabouts of his own son, and nephew. So then accordingly those guards were sent, and without much difficulty, they found Zacharias in the temple of his God. And they said, making some plausible excuse for their asking: Tell us where is thy son? And also where is the son of thy cousin by marriage. And Zacharias answered, evasively: I am a priest in the temple, and occupied all day with my duties, and so cannot tell where these children are of whom you speak, seeing their mothers have taken them away to a place of which I know nothing. So those guards went back to Herod forthwith, no wiser than when they had set out.

Then that culprit of a king was more enraged than ever, and sent them back again saying: Do you this time find out from Zacharias without fail the whereabouts of those children, and if he refuses to tell, then say to him, his life is in my hand and he must choose between its loss and the revealing of what I desire to know. So once more those guards returned to Zacharias giving him the king's message, as also his threat. But once again that loyal and fearless priest returned them the same answer, adding with serenity: As to the threat, it is unworthy of a monarch and one who ought in keeping with his high office to be a man of wisdom: for who can

deprive me of my life, seeing it is eternal and a part of God, and therefore no more dependant on the body than the space in which it exists? Nevertheless if you shed my blood, you will shed that of an innocent man who gives his body for truth; and because of this, whose soul will be saved by the Lord of all souls.

Then upon hearing this, those guards, fearful to return to Herod because of his anger at being thwarted a second time, lost their tempers completely, and forgetful of everything, thrust the body of Zacharias through with daggers there and then in the temple where he stood, so that he fell before the curtain of the sanctuary of his Lord and expired without a word. And when the populace heard what had happened, they were consumed with grief, and swore vengeance on those assassins; for Zacharias was beloved throughout the entire land. But the unalterable law of sequence and consequence (6) took vengeance into its own hand instead, for Herod in a veritable storm of anger at being frustrated in his designs, cast those guards into a dungeon without food and drink, so that eventually they died. And in a few years Herod died also.

4

But meanwhile Mary, Joseph, and Elizabeth and their two sons, were journeying to Egypt, with a place named Zoan as their destination, to which, tired and travel-worn they eventually

came. And by reason of leaving the Essenian Brotherhood, and hence being deprived of instructors in the science of the soul, they were by the law of desire and aspiration, guided to two masters, called Elihu and Salome, who lived in the vicinity of a sacred grove, where they were accustomed to teach. And when their prospective pupils had found a suitable dwelling place, those masters bade them come each day to that sacred grove, and so learn to progress in the knowledge of the Divine, as also in the art of deep contemplation, with its control of the body and mind. And among many other things, they taught these pupils how to prepare their sons for the missions which had been allotted to them, and the great part they were to take in the spiritual evolution of mankind ; and how they must come to know that God and man were potentially one, and could become actually so by identifying the mind with that one-ness. Or to put it conversely, that man is in reality one with God, but only by the realisation of that fact through the mind, does he become conscious thereof and know himself to be what in all truth he is. And again because of this one-ness, that no man lives unto himself alone, in that every living thing is bound by invisible cords, as it were, to every other living thing : therefore he who knows but his little separate self, knows but illusions and transient things, but he who knows the great Self or the unity with all beings, knows the everlasting things.

And then, in addition, those benign masters taught their pupils the essential truths of other religions,

as also the great truth that all religion is one, and that what appears as a ' new faith ', is but the emphasisation of some particular factor especially suited for the needs of a particular people, yet never a new *truth* in itself, however much in appearance it may seem to be so. And then in connection with those other religions, they imparted something of the knowledge of the Cosmos, telling their ready pupils how all Cosmic truth could only be clothed in the language of symbol and poetry, so that it might be understood by the initiates of all ages, who would read with the eyes of the spirit instead of the senses. For, know, said one of these masters, before the worlds were brought into manifestation, all things were one Universal Spirit or Breath, as it is called, and then the Spirit breathed, and that which was unmanifest became the Fire and Thought of ' heaven ', the Father and Mother-God. And when the Fire and Thought of heaven breathed in unison, their Son, which is Love, was born. And then the Divine God breathed, and behold seven spirits came into being ; and these are the Elohim, the creative spirits of the universe : and it was those spirits who said ' let us make man '. And know further, said the masters, that in one great country of the world, that Universal Spirit was called Tao, and in another Brahman : and this Brahman or Tao was the first One, that One becoming the Two and that Two becoming the Three, and then the Three evolved the seven, who filled the Universe with all beings. And in this fact is contained the Divine but joyful sacrifice ; to be found in all sacred

books of all religions; in that the ONE divided Himself into the many, in order that each individual unit of the many should enjoy this Consciousness of the ONE, and so attain to Perfection and Bliss.

Now at the end of three years the tuition under the masters in the sacred grove at Zoan came to a close: and they said to their pupils: The call has come, and the way is now free from all obstacles, so that ye may at length return to your native lands for the mighty work that is given you to do: for your sons are set apart to lead men along the Path of Emancipation. And yet in preparation for that work, they must tread many a brambled road, and meet, like other men—yea, more than other men—fierce trials and temptations and loads that will not be light. And they will sit at the feet of many masters and go through many initiations, but nevertheless the end is assured. And now, may the blessings of the Three and the Seven rest upon them and rest upon you for evermore. So saying, those benign masters embraced their pupils and bade them farewell; and Mary and Elizabeth shed a tear at parting as they set forth upon their journey home. And then together with Joseph and their two sons they travelled for many long moons, by way of the Dead Sea, until at last they reached the hills of Engaddi, where they rested in the house of one Joshua, a relative. And here learning with sorrow of her husband's death, and having in consequence no longer a home, Elizabeth took up her abode. But Joseph and Mary and their son

went by way of the Jordan to their native place of Nazareth in Galilee.

And as time went by, the boy, John, began to grow in body and understanding, and also began to delight in the wild and rugged scenery of his home among the hills. And many a lesson he learnt from Nature, as also from the lips of his mother, who imparted to him much of the lore she had acquired from her masters in Zoan. And when he came to be seven years old a sage, named Matheus, and known as the Hermit of Engaddi, took him to live with him in a cave not far away from home; for in the hills were many such caves, which acted as suitable habitations for such as elected to live a life of simple fare. And John came to love this hermit exceedingly, and to regard him in the light of a master, and also to love the wilderness with its nature-food of fruits and nuts and wild honey and carob bread. And then in due course the hermit revealed to him the mysteries of life and death, and such other lore as his understanding could grasp, taking him from time to time to Jerusalem and to the temple, so that he might learn something of the ways of mankind; for Matheus himself was an Israelite and was in the habit of attending the Jewish feasts.

5

And so with the Hermit of Engaddi he lived for many years, visiting his mother however from time to time in her home not far away; until, when he

had reached his twelfth year, she died, and was buried in a tomb among her kindred, near to that of Zacharias in the Hebron burial ground. And then John was consumed with grief, and wept an abundance of tears seeming to have no end, seeing that he loved his mother with an unchanging affection, the more so, as she was the only parent he had ever known. But Matheus the hermit, although he was the very incarnation of sympathy and solicitude, yet nevertheless gently rebuked his pupil for his grief, saying: My son, it behoves thee not to weep because of death, since death is no foe of man, but rather a friend, who, when the labour of terrestrial life is accomplished, cuts, as it were, the cord which tethers the human boat to earth, so that it may sail on smoother and happier and vaster seas. And this being so, learn, that uncontrollable sorrow is but selfishness in disguise, and not only injurious to him who feels that sorrow, but also to the soul who has gone on its celestial holiday; for who can enjoy their time of recreation, when all the while they are conscious of the grief of those who are left behind, and to whom they cannot return in the flesh even though they would? So therefore, dispel thy sorrow, thinking not of thine own loss but of thy mother's gain; as also of thy work for the living, who stand in need of thy energies more than the so-called dead. For learn—now, at this first crisis of thy young life—what is the mission allotted to thee on earth; a mission which is none other than to act as an harbinger for a Great One who is to come, and with whom thou art

unseverably linked (7) ; not only in this life—for he and thou have already been playmates together in infancy—but in many lives to come. And the essence of thy mission is to teach unselfishness of heart and word and action, and not only to teach it, but to be a veritable epitome of it thyself ; seeing that mankind stands in need of an example to follow, so that they may learn the way. And know, that no razor must ever touch thy face or head, nor must thou eat flesh nor taste intoxicating drink, but be an ascetic of the order of the Nazarenes. And thy office will be to perform a symbolic rite, indicative of the cleansing of the soul, and by thy oratory and example, to induce thy fellowmen to reform their ways and become, as it were, the sons of purity, that so they may attain not only unconditional Peace, but also recognise the yet higher Example when the time for His mission is ripe. For know further—that when the world is ready to receive, the giver is always forthcoming, and the teaching he gives, is the one-ness of man and God and the method whereby to bring it into manifestation.

And thus it was that John became an orphan, left with no-one that he loved but his master, Matheus the hermit. And yet that master, because of the depth of his nature and the emancipation of his heart, became more to his pupil than even the blending of mother and father in one. For truly no bond is so close as the relationship between pupil and master in the science of the Divine, seeing the love of the former is the very quintessential unity

of admiration, and gratitude, and filial affection and receptivity and other qualities of devotion, while the love of the latter is that delight of giving that the inititate and *he only* can experience, because of the utter selflessness of his soul.

So then as time went on, there came a day when the Hermit of Engaddi made an end of his sojourn among the hills, and set out with John, his pupil, in the direction of Egypt, finally arriving at the temple of Sakara, in the valley of the Nile: for among other things he was a master from this temple. And there, after a few explanations, the hierophant received his pupil with extended arms, and it was agreed he should be called the Brother Nazarite. And then for eighteen years he lived within the temple gates, and went through many initiations, conquering the lower self and finally becoming a master mind (8).

6

And meanwhile, Joseph and Mary and their son were living once more in their native place of Nazareth in the verdant, shady, ever-smiling district of Galilee; where at springtime the whole country seemed like a tapestry woven with real flowers and of a variety of hues appearing to have no end. And upon this mellifluous carpet the most delicate of birds flitted here and there, birds so light of weight that they could perch even on a blade of grass without bending it to the earth. And yet though so minute, they were almost as

tame and fearless as man himself, venturing well nigh under the very feet of the passers-by, as if all timidity to them were utterly unknown. And here, amid the variegated melodies of idyllic nature (9) did the expanding consciousness of the boy, Jesus, awake, and the external soul of beauty begin as it were to meet his internal soul, and to form the beginnings of that character which eventually in all things could perceive the essence of loveliness and truth. For in this sun-kissed pleasaunce of mountain and mead, beside the cool streams, or in the large farms shaded with vine and fig-trees, or along the gardensides with their branches hanging 'neath apples and walnuts and pomegranates, this boy used to wander, alone or in company with his playfellows, imbibing, however unconsciously to himself, the idyllic loveliness of his surroundings like sustenance to a growing soul.

And yet, Nature was not his sole teacher, seeing his mother imparted to him in language adapted to the tenderness of his years many of the lessons she had learnt from her masters. But further, he was taught to read and write according to the Eastern method, which consisted of placing a book in the hands of a child, that he might repeat its contents in unison with his little school-fellows, until he knew it by heart. And then when after awhile he had progressed sufficiently, he showed a strange and precocious delight in reading the Jewish books of prophecy, and the Psalms of David, and the wise sayings of Solomon, and many another script, apparently quite unsuited to his years.

But although he perused these learned books, he was neither austere nor especially sedate of mien; retaining all the while a child-likeness of nature, which, combined with a ready wit and understanding of things totally inconsistent with his meagre years,won the hearts of all his beholders. Nevertheless at times he was deeply contemplative and a dreamer of dreams, some rendering him joyful and some a little sad, according to their nature; but only when they were especially strange did he confide them to anyone, for the most part locking them up entirely in his own heart.

And yet there came a dream to him one day, so vivid and so seemingly significant, that he needs must find someone in whom to confide, that perhaps from their lips he might learn its meaning. And in the house where he lived, dwelt also Anna his grandmother, whom he loved; seeing as a little child he had heard many stories from her lips before sinking to sleep at night; and seeing her own love for him was very deep, showing itself in countless ways. And so to her he went, and sitting at her feet with his head upon her knee, he recounted his dream. And he said: I stood upon a sandy shore before a vast sea, and the waves upon the sea were very high, for a storm was raging over the deep. And then someone floating above me gave me a wand, and taking that wand I touched the sand, and every grain became a living thing; the beach becoming all a mass of beauty and song. And then I touched the waters at my feet, and they were transformed into trees and flowers and singing

birds, and everything was praising God. Then someone spoke and I did not see the one who spoke, but I heard a voice, which said : There is no death. And when Jesus had finished speaking he looked up into the face of his listener ; saying, And now, seeing thou art venerable and wise, tell me if thou canst divine the meaning of my dream ? And that old dame immediately laid her hand on the boy's head, and said with a smile in her dim eyes : The sea of thy dreams is the sea of life, and the storms of life are many and great. And the sand is the multitude of human beings on the earth—lying idle and listless, waiting upon the shore. But thy wand is Truth, and with this thou dost touch the multitude, so that every man becomes a messenger of light and life. And thou dost touch the waves upon the sea of life, so that all turmoils cease, and the very winds become a song of adoration. And verily there is no death, because the wand of truth can transform even the driest bones of living things, and bring forth the fairest flowers from stagnant pools, and turn the most discordant sounds to harmony and praiseful song : and so saying that old dame ceased. Then across the boy's face came a look of joy, not unmingled with a shade of perplexity, as he said : Thy interpreptation is strange indeed, and yet within me something tells me it is also true, though how, I cannot say—whereupon he kissed the hand of his old granddam, and arose from the floor, making his way slowly towards the open, that he might stroll on the hill-side and sink himself in thought (10).

And as time went by, gradually his character blossomed like the opening of a delicate flower in the morning sun, so that the world, for the most part, came to appear in his eyes like a panorama of loveliness ; seeing that an unconditional beauty lived as it were in his own soul, shedding its illuminating rays upon all around. And yet, because of an extreme tenderness of heart there were times when compassion gnawed his sensitive body like a great pain ; for anything in the shape of cruelty was abhorrent to him, as also utterly foreign to his understanding. And although the every-day existence of Nazareth ran a peaceful and even course, presenting seldom to his eyes anything harsh or discordant, yet so responsive was he to all suffering, that the little injustices, unperceived by others, scarcely failed ever to pass him unnoticed by. Nay, it is told by the chroniclers, that, one day as he was rambling on the hill-slopes, he came to a place where a snare had been set for birds, around which some boys stood, amusing themselves by the sight of the struggle of those birds to wrench themselves free. And a storm of indignation and pity swept over Jesus, so that he angrily asked : Who indeed has set a cruel snare for these innocent little creatures of God ? But in reply those boys only laughed, and made game of him for being a milk-sop. And then he said—withering them with his scorn : Ye fools, can there be aught of manly in torturing the infinitely weak, and so using force on those who are utterly incapable of defending themselves in any form whatever ?

So saying, totally heedless of all ridicule, he immediately proceeded to set those birds free, so that they flew away. And then, burning with indignation he cried: Those who set snares for the innocent, shall in like manner, one day, themselves be caught in a snare (11).—whereupon he walked away in silent contempt. But legend recounts that he brought those birds to life instead, with a few passes of his hands; and that many other wonders he performed, in that flowers were seen to spring up beneath his very feet, where hitherto there had been nothing but barren ground. Nevertheless, legend is no criterion of history, though in many a legend is concealed an everlasting truth.

7

Now Mary and Joseph were accustomed each year to journey to Jerusalem, in order to attend the Feast of the Passover, which they observed after the manner of their brethren. And so when Jesus came to be twelve years old, they took him for the first time in their company, according to the custom of the times. And this pilgrimage was a much cherished solemnity for the Jews, whole series of psalms being consecrated to celebrate the pleasures of so journeying in family fellowship during several days of the radiant Spring. For the road, by way of Ginæa and Shechem, lay across hills and valleys decorated with the new vernal beauties, and although steep and toilsome for the traveller, yet by reason of the old sanctuaries of Shiloh and

Bethel lying not far off the road, his interest was ever sustained as he walked along. And then after two days, finally Ainel-Haramie, the last halting place was reached, where surrounded by a Nature, which is a unity of charm and melancholy, the travellers encamped for the night. And the valley of their encampment is narrow and sombre and strange, while a dark stream issues from rocks which form its banks ; the banks themselves being full of tombs : for this valley is called the vale of tears because of its dropping waters and its sepulchral air.

So then, having remained in this place for one night, those travellers, when the morning sun had arisen, set forth on the last stage of their journey, arriving at Jerusalem that same day. And then it came about that Jesus, for the first time in his life, beheld the great city, with its mighty array of large domes and cupolas and minarets and towers, all lifting their proud white heads above the enveloping walls towards a cerulean sky. For those walls themselves carried no less than sixty towers ; seeing that Herod, after capturing the city with the aid of the Romans, had embellished and fortified it, as also built a most sumptuous palace as a place of residence for himself. Nay, this imposing residence contained a number of vast halls, and peristyles, and inner courts with bountiful enrichments and gorgeously decorated columns, while as if to stand gigantic sentinels, three great towers of defence, named Hippicus, Phasal and Mariamene, reared themselves on the north sides. Furthermore, this sumptuously-minded king had according to

Roman custom erected a theatre, as also the Xystus, a vast arena surrounded by colonnades for the purpose of gymnastic games; so that Jerusalem with its royal palace and numerous other palaces, its majestic temple, its lofty walls with their bastions, and its many villas standing in cyprus-girded gardens, presented a sight so imposing as to strike a chord, as it were, in the soul of Jesus which went on echoing and re-echoing all through his life. Nevertheless vast and spacious though the city looked from without, yet in its interior, the streets were narrow and crooked, and by reason of that narrowness, forever overcrowded with the throngs of people that incessantly moved to and fro; babbling uninterruptedly, like a river too voluminous for its steep narrow banks. Nay, because of the festival, not only was the city filled with its own denizens, but with a vast concourse of people from all parts of the land. For this festivity was an occasion on which the whole assembled nation exchanged its ideas, being by that reason almost invariably a centre of much agitation; so that for the first time Jesus came into contact with the mentality of his fellow countrymen. And yet if he was impressed, nevertheless because of his idealistic and sensitive temperament, he came—all too soon for the peace of his own mind—to be inspired with a poignant antipathy for the official representatives of the Faith; as also for the rites of that faith themselves. And being fearless and outspoken he gave vent to his thoughts without hesitation; saying one day to his mother: Truly

these Rabbis seem to imagine that God is partial in his treatment of the sons of men, and that Jews are favoured above all others. And yet, how can God be guilty of favouritism, and at the same time be a just God, for are not Samaritans and Greeks and Romans as much the children of the Divine as are the Jews? And his mother smiled, as one smiles at the unanswerable arguments of the young, pondering much but saying nothing in reply.

But if he was shocked by the sectarian views of the people, he was even more shocked at the display of cruelty he witnessed, as the lambs and birds were killed in order that they might be burnt on the altar as a sacrifice. So that one day he said to the priest with a tone of indignation in his voice: What can be the purpose of this slaughtering of beasts and birds, that their flesh might be burnt before the Lord? And the priest replied, with some irritation: This is our sacrifice for sin, seeing that God has commanded us to do these things that our sins might be expunged. Then said Jesus; Not so, for did not David maintain that God demands no sacrifice for sin, nay, that he regarded it as a sin in itself to bring burnt offerings as a sacrifice for transgression: and did not Isaiah say likewise? Then the priest thought to himself: Out upon this precocious youth and his arguments, seeing he is audacious enough to pit his meagre knowledge against my weight of experience. But aloud he said; My boy, it is unseemly for one so young to argue with his elders, for how canst thou know more about the laws of God than the priests

of Israel? Moreover this is no place nor occasion for young boys to exhibit their wit. Then Jesus smiled to himself and turned on his heel heedless of the rebuke: but straightway he went to Hillel, chief of the Sanhedrim, in order to plead his cause, as he hoped, with more effect. And Hillel was wise and learned and discerning and full of sympathy, so that he understood the boy and his feelings, recognising immediately in him a rich nature and a soul apart from the run of his fellowmen. And by reason of this, Jesus felt on his part an immediate love for this benign old man, so that he asked his parents if he might not remain with him in order to take advantage of his learning and become for a while his pupil; and the parents gave their consent.

So then for the space of a year, Jesus sat at the feet of Hillel, acquiring knowledge of the Law and of the Prophets; but when his master, as the months went by, came to know more and more of his pupil, he thought within himself: Surely this is a great prophet in embryo, and meseems the teacher is learning as much from the pupil as the pupil from the master; seeing the heart of this boy seems to be the very home of wisdom and love (12).

So then when the year had gone by, Mary and Joseph returned once again to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover, as also to fetch their son and to take him back to the place of his birth. But Jesus was very loth to go, having no other taste but for learning and discussion among the doctors of the law; while the painful thought of

leaving his master preyed unceasingly upon his heart. Nevertheless when the festivities had come to an end, with tears as it were in his soul, he started, in company with his parents and many another homeward-journeying family, towards Nazareth. And as far as Samaria he journeyed, conversing the while with one group of people and then with another; for because of his charm and ever-ready wit, he ingratiated himself into the hearts of the entire company. And yet all the while he was tortured inwardly by an unquenchable longing to return to his master and the precincts of the temple; so that at length he could withstand it no more; and seizing a favourable opportunity when his parents were too engrossed with others to take note of him, cunningly made his way back to Jerusalem, his desertion escaping observation altogether. But finally when those parents saw what had happened they became filled with consternation, not knowing which way to turn for news of his whereabouts; thinking even that something untoward might have befallen him, and chiding themselves for not having kept a better watch. And so there arose a perfect hubbub among all the travellers on the way, some saying this, and some that, and some suggesting one method of procedure, and some suggesting another, until the minds of those unhappy and apprehensive parents became a veritable whirlpool of perplexities, going round and round incessantly and never discerning any end. Then at length Joseph said: There is nothing for it but to return the way we

came, making enquiries all along the road; for seeing he was so loth to come away, perhaps he has returned to the city—whereupon without further delay those luckless parents began wearily to retrace their steps. And of all the wayfarers along the road they enquired: Has anyone seen a fair-haired youth walking with his face set towards Jerusalem? And for answer, some said yes, and some said no; but those who had seen him at all, were in one accord that he was walking towards the city.

So then, when they had finally come to Jerusalem, they went immediately to the temple courts, and asked of the guards 'Have *you* seen a youth, with fair hair and deep blue eyes, and some twelve years (13), anywhere about these courts? And the guards replied in the affirmative, adding: No doubt he will be in the temple now disputing with the doctors of the law. So then those parents, torn, as it were, between relief and annoyance and fatigue, went into the temple and found him exactly as the guards had said. And Joseph exclaimed peremptorily: How now, what means this treatment of thy parents? Know, that we have sought thee for two days, thinking some evil had overtaken thee, and in consequence eating our hearts out with anxiety; and all to no avail. Then Jesus looked at them with a smile, at once both apologetic and conciliating, saying with a touch of humour: Did ye not know I must be about my heavenly Father's work? And because of the poetry and the humour and the devotion manifest in the answer, as also the irresistible smile, his parents forgave him then

and there. But nevertheless they demanded that he should return with them immediately to Nazareth ; so that after he had embraced his master and taken an affectionate farewell of the other doctors, he set out once more in the direction of his home.

So then he was apprenticed for some time to his father, that later on he might become a master carpenter. And he learned to make wheels, and yokes, and tables (14) and many other articles, manifesting much skill ; but all the time, a part of his mind was sunk in his own inner soul, and evolving as it were, a new conception of life.

II

I

Now it so happened that a Royal Prince of India, named Ravanna of Orissa came to the West, for he was a man of vast wealth; and seeing he delighted in travel, there was no obstacle to the gratification of his taste. But he was also a man of much learning, and so elected to journey with many pundits among his retinue, that he and they might profit by coming into contact with western lore. And it was the springtime, and again the Feast of the Passover had filled the streets of Jerusalem with Jews and proselytes from many countries round about, and among them was Jesus, now grown to full stature, and gifted with even greater eloquence than heretofore. So as he sat amongst the priests and doctors in the temple hall, reading the sacred books and expounding their meaning, Ravanna who was also among the assembly, took an instant liking to him, saying within himself: Truly this youth is a veritable incarnation of eloquence and strength and beauty all blended into one, and most certainly I must discover who he is and how he comes to be possessed of so prodigious a gift. And accordingly he sought out Hillel, the chief priest, so that he might obtain an answer to the question in his mind. And Hillel said: O, Maharajah, your

interest and admiration are not ill-placed ; nay, so great is our own love for this boy, that amongst ourselves we call him the Day-Star from on High, deeming him a veritable light to lighten the way of men, and who knows perhaps to redeem Israel our people. And then Hillel disclosed to him all he knew of the boy, and the prophecies concerning him, and of the flight into Egypt after his birth, and of the occult warnings received by his parents, and also of his present life as carpenter in Nazareth : so that Ravanna was interested and charmed and impressed almost beyond words, thinking, after the manner of his own beliefs : Would not my Guru be delighted with so promising a chela (15) ? But to Hillel he said : O, venerable Rabbi, instruct me that I may find his parents in order to put forward a project—if acceptable to them—that he journey with me back to India, the home of occult sciences and of sages and yogis and religious adepts of all kinds.

So then Hillel did as he was asked, and accordingly Ravanna with his gorgeous train of attendants journeyed after a few days preparation to Nazareth, following in the wake of Jesus and his parents, who had left Jerusalem immediately after the termination of the feast. And when he came to his destination, he found the object of his ever increasing interest busily engaged in constructing dwellings and other necessities of terrestrial life. So he conversed with Jesus for the first time, laying before him the project which had already been put before Hillel, his master, as also before

his parents, who were taking a few days, wherein to consider whether they would fall in with the project or no. But Jesus on his part was elated with enthusiasm, saying with gratitude: Let me wander the whole world over, so only I may gain knowledge and wisdom to help my fellow men. And Ravanna thought within himself: Truly I see before me the real Bhakti (*a*), who perceives the oneness of all beings, and asks not even knowledge for himself alone.

Then after much deliberation those selfless parents gave their consent, and to celebrate the occasion, Ravanna made a great valedictory feast, inviting all the people of the little town, and Jesus and his parents as the honoured guests. But the heart of Mary was sad at losing her first-born son, and was only prevented from giving way to grief by reason of the mission she knew was before him, and the faith inherent within her own noble heart. And Joseph, on his part, reflected sadly: Have I taught my son my own trade to no purpose, seeing he is about to leave it aside perhaps for ever: and the more pity it is because of his undoubted skill. Nevertheless his life is guided by the hands of Masters, and so I must renounce my own ambitions for him, and uncomplainingly suffer him to follow the way to which destiny points.

So then in a few days Jesus bid farewell to his parents and his younger brothers, with both a joy and a grief in his heart, seeing the pathos of parting

(*a*) *i.e.*, Devotee. One who takes that path of Yoga known as the Path of Devotion and Divine Love.

tore him, as it were, in one direction, and the vast prospects before him in another. But Mary, although her soul was well-nigh bleeding, gave no sign, knowing the tenderness of her son's heart; and only when he was out of sight, did she fall on to her couch and weep aloud.

And after a long time, Ravanna, with his retinue, came nearer to the Land of the Rising Sun, crossing the Sind, and finally reaching the province of Orissa, where lay his gorgeous palace; and where great festivities were prepared for his reception after so long an absence in foreign lands. And this palace erected its proud array of domes and minarets from within vast grounds, containing every variety of garden, and shaded by every variety of sweet flowering tree and shrub, which stood amid a perfect carpet of variegated blossoms, caressing the eye with odorous caresses, and the ear with the melodious rustling of leaves. And alabaster fountains wafted cool opalescent spray on all around, giving the air an indescribable fragrance, and filling every particle of the sequestered garden-close with elusive water-music, as the myriad drops trickled like phantom opals into the crystalline basin-pools. And around and among the flowers were countless soft-humming insects, and columns of bees surging in melodious activity, vying in sweetness with the music of the fountains and the soft murmur of the trembling leaves. But if the gardens were a perfect fantasy of beauty, the palace itself was no less so, for its vast halls were hung with gorgeous silk arras, and it contained many marble courtyards, with

cool water tanks covered with lotuses, and its rooms were filled with many coloured mirrors, studded with rubies and lapis lazuli and every variety of stone and gem. Nor was the daily life within this palace less beautiful than its setting, for dawn was welcomed by a morning song, chanted by the court minstrels and accompanied by strange but exceedingly mellow stringed instruments: and at noontide a song of a different character was sung, while at the setting of sun, still yet another kind wafted its melodious fragrance upon the vesperal air.

And when Jesus beheld all this vision of transplendence, his soul wellnigh left his body, and his consciousness seemed to expand to the Infinite in its transport of adoration; so that, for the first few days he spent his hours meditating in the various gardens, and listening to the fountains and to the insects, and to the entire music of sun-kissed Nature, that it might give something of its ineffable essence to his soul: and yet he, on his own part, poured out, as it were, his whole heart to meet its embrace, and to experience a divine unity with everything he beheld. Nevertheless there came a time when he said within himself: I must hasten on, and must progress in learning, for terrestrial life is not eternal, and the years all too soon flee away. And so he asked Ravanna, his patron, that he might be put in touch with the Brahmic priests, and so learn anything they had to impart. And accordingly Ravanna granted his request, and he was accepted as a lay pupil in the

temple of Jaganath, where he studied the Vedas and the Laws of Manu, and many other scripts of ancient lore. And here among these priests, he learned of the different Paths to Liberation, called Yoga; of Karma Yoga, the paths of selfless action; of Bhakti Yoga, the path of devotion; of Gnana Yoga, the path of Wisdom, and how in the end, all these paths converged into one; being but several roads to the same goal. But as he learned—and the priests marvelled at his aptitude—he felt all the time as if he were but gradually remembering something he had known before.

And it came about that Jesus made a friend, one Lamaas (16) by name, a priest in the temple; and this friend conducted him through all the many regions of Orissa, and the valley of the Ganges, that together they might encounter the holy men to be found everywhere in India, and learn wisdom at their feet; for Jesus sought to acquire something of Hatha Yoga, the great Hindoo art of healing. Now there was a great Yogi who lived near Benares, renowned throughout all India for his knowledge and his miraculous powers and wisdom. And although this man was very old, yet by reason of his Yogic powers he retained the aspect of youth, having neither a wrinkle nor a single grey hair upon his slender and beautiful body. And he had many disciples, and busied himself the greater part of the day with teaching and discoursing, being, it seemed utterly immune from anything in the nature of fatigue. But although he taught incessantly, he never accepted recompense of any sort whatsoever; living on the simplest fare of fruits and nuts

and herbs, which he gathered from the wood wherein he lived.

And so when Jesus and his friend came to Benares, they went in quest of this man, that they might do him reverence, and perhaps be enrolled among his disciples; for said Jesus to himself: Truly a happiness it were to heal people's infirmities, and to banish pain from suffering bodies as a preliminary to curing their souls. So then one day they arrived at the habitation of the Yogi within the wood, and after paying him homage stated the desire of their hearts. And that Yogi smiled and made reply, saying: The august science of Yoga cannot be entrusted to everyone lest they abuse its powers, and so do harm in the world instead of good; nevertheless if ye prove yourselves worthy, my teaching shall not be withheld; and in any case ye are welcome to remain here, and talk with me when I am not busied with others, seeing by that method I shall come to know more of you, as also whether ye are ready for the science of Yoga or not. And so accordingly Jesus and his friend remained in the vicinity of Benares; and then later on came to sit at the feet of that Yogi, learning as a result the wonders of Nature's hidden laws, and the acquirement of the absolute perfection of physical health, but above all a phenomenal control of the mind.

2

So then after remaining many years with this Master, Jesus bade him farewell and set out on his further travels; and because of his eloquence and his charm, he made many friends wherever he went, discoursing to large assemblies (1) on the mysteries of the soul, and expounding the meaning of the Vedas in such a way as to captivate the heart. For by reason of his yogic practices Jesus had become endowed with a flow of language, and a richness of metaphor, and a poetry of phrase wonderful to hear (17), while the spiritual magnetism of his whole being enveloped, as it were, his listeners, so that every word he uttered found its way direct to the soul. Nevertheless if he made friends, he made also enemies, for his interpretation of the Vedas angered the priests, so that they said among themselves: Truly our sway over the people will be placed in jeopardy if the downfall of this outspoken orator be not in some manner brought about. For Jesus spoke to the people of low caste, to the tillers of the field, and the menials and the pariahs, and his theme always included the degradation of religion and the perversion of truth by the priests, not only because of their lack of spiritual insight, but because of their acquisitiveness and lust for power.

And one day as he preached, standing imposing and erect, yet with a smile of brotherly sympathy on his face, he said: Know, O my friends, and children of Immortality, that behind all things

that change, there is one thing that changes not, and that is Truth, or the Divine Spirit which is, which was and shall be for evermore. And that Divine Spirit is what your sages have called the Sat-chit-Ananda, meaning The Absolute Existence, Knowledge and Bliss; for these three things are inseparable, and, on the plane of the Absolute, cannot be divided. And know further, that this Divine Essence pervades the whole of the Universe, and is the very Self of your own beings, nearer than the very nearest. But that ye may realise it to the full, think of It as a Divine Father, whose attribute is boundless Love, and in whose eyes all men are equal; seeing that the real Self of man is one with that Father, and so it cannot be otherwise. And yet because of greed and desire, priests have withheld from you this truth, and made it incumbent upon you to go to them, that ye may commune with the Divine, thereby placing you in bondage, whereas in reality ye are eternally free. And because of this, as also their ignorance, they have defiled the symbolic and the poetical with the soilure of materialism, and turned the limitless into the circumscribed, thus even endowing the Divine Essence with evil attributes, such as anger and jealously and favouritism and revenge. But the reason for this is, that those very priests, by pretending to assuage the Divine Father, are thus enabled to pretend also that they act as mediators between yourselves and God, thereby gaining control over you, and making of you slaves when ye are nothing of the kind. For learn, that as a man

thinks within his heart so does he become, and consequently he who believes himself to be what another man tells him he is, becomes that very thing solely because of his belief. Just as, long ago in a former generation, there lived a weak-minded and foolish monarch, who although possessing no enemies without, in the shape of hostile neighbouring kings, yet possessed something worse, namely enemies actually within his own court, in the shape of perfidious and unscrupulous ministers who contrived to accomplish his downfall in every possible way, so as to obtain the kingdom for themselves. And realizing the dulness of his wits, at length an idea came suddenly, like an arrow into their dark and evil hearts; and they said among themselves: Surely the easiest way to dethrone this king is to manœuvre that his short wits come to an end altogether and he go totally mad. And so one day they appeared before him with crestfallen faces and said: O Sire, by the mismanagement of affairs an awful calamity has come about, for through the unscrupulousness of underlings, the business of the state has gone totally to rack and ruin, so that we and you, O sire, are utterly beggared, and scarce have a shekel to our names. Then the king on hearing this, because of his weak-mindedness and credulity, fell to the ground with the shock, and swooned away, only returning to consciousness after many hours. But as a result, he went totally mad in accordance with the designs and hopes of those perfidious ministers; never in this life regaining his wits anymore. And such

was the nature of his madness, that he left his palace, and clothing himself in rags, went about from place to place as a beggar, asking at every house: 'Where is the king who has ruined his people, and so been dethroned as a result'? And yet all the time he was the king himself, and no more a beggar than the Maharajah of this land. And so it is, O my brothers! with us, for we think ourselves beggared of the Divine Love and Knowledge and Happiness, and think ourselves bound, when in reality we are eternally free: and all this, because perfidious priests hypnotise us into believing the false instead of the true. Therefore, O men of India, awake, and realise your own powers and your own inherent nature; and when any man, be he priest or pariah, tells you the contrary, believe him not, but answer him that he errs, and that he slanders the Divine Father who knows nought of anger, nor favouritism, nor enslavement, but only perfect justice and love.

And then Jesus ceased speaking, and there arose a veritable storm of applause, which seemed as if it would never come to an end. And all the people cried: Tell us more, and show us the way, that like flowers we may unfold, and come to our own. But Jesus, because of the hatred of the priests, fearing to have an end put to his labours of devotion by reason of being deprived of his body, quickly journeyed on to another place out of the reach of harm (18).

3

And yet as time went on, and his popularity with the people increased by reason of the joyful gospel he preached, it so came about that nowhere was he safe, for the priests put spies everywhere to have him watched, and if possible without creating an uproar, to bring about his death. Nevertheless, his admirers and disciples, discovering these nefarious designs, acted, so to say, as counter-spies, warning him of all danger, that immediately he might move on to another town in the nick of time. And so he travelled from one place to another, covering at length the whole of India, as also Thibet ; preaching the while, and employing the knowledge he had gained from that Yogi of Benares in healing the sick.

Then after some years he came to turn at last his face towards home, crossing the borders of Persia, in which land he encountered the three Magi, who had brought to his cradle so long ago those gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. For as he approached Persepolis, where they dwelt, these Magi, by reason of their psychic powers, became aware of the fact, and so set out to meet him while yet underway. And they had become bowed with a great weight of years, though their minds were still keen and clear, reflecting the truth of divine philosophies as faithfully as the clear waters in a well reflect the stars, though the well itself be very old. So then they took Jesus back with them to their own dwelling place, where he

remained for some months, while other sages from all parts came to discuss with him at the invitation of his hosts.

But when the time of his visit was over, he journeyed onward to Assyria, visiting, among many other places, Babylon; for he had sought out an Assyrian sage of great fame, who came to act as his companion and guide: so that together they wandered in that ancient city of ruined palaces, where Israel erstwhile had been held in captivity and where Daniel of immortal renown had stood (19). And one day Jesus said as he halted before the superb ruins of a once mighty work of art: Verily, great Empires arise and decay, having their few years of material prosperity and then sinking into oblivion never to rise again; but with all their decay, one thing remains, and that is their Art, which being a reflection, however much tarnished, of the ineffable splendour of the Divine, borrows, as it were, something of His everlastingness. And the sage said: Thou hast uttered truth; and yet in this heap of expired glories I behold still another reflection, namely, the reflection of the law of sequence and consequence as applied to nations as well as to individuals. For did not the king of this very city of Babylon burn down thy holy city of Jerusalem, and bind with chains thy forefathers, to bring them here as slaves; his own subjects, instead of protesting, suffering it to be so, for their own aggrandisement? And yet that very glory which they took away from others, came, later on, to be taken away from themselves;

for truly, the sun of this Babylon has gone down for evermore, and instead of happy and prosperous mortals inhabiting her halls, and filling them with the sound of mirth and song, those halls are inhabited alone by every manner of creeping and unclean thing, and filled with the hooting of night birds and the squeaking of bats.

So then, after a little while's sojourn in the plains of Shinar, Jesus, with expressions of friendship and thanks, bade farewell to his companion and guide, and at length crossed the Jordan, so entering once more his native land. And as the familiar features of the plains and valleys spread themselves before him, he reflected on the nature of patriotism, and the love which a man feels for the country of his birth; saying within his own mind: He who is foolish, loves that country because of vanity, and consequently because he feels it to be *his*; desiring it on that account to be the greatest nation of the world, controlling other nations and being so to say uppermost dog in the fight for glory. And yet this very attitude, because of its childish vanity, is the baneful mother of most national conflicts, and until it vanishes from human nature, truly, war will never cease; seeing that vanity and greed are the root of most evils. But the more enlightened man, on the other hand, loves his country alone because of its people, and the beauty of its landscape, caring not whether it be possessed of limitless dominions, but solely that its people be well governed, and thus happy, and enabled to thrive in peace. Nevertheless, he

who has attained to perfect emancipation, and consequently is possessed of the very highest wisdom, loves all countries alike, regarding himself as a citizen of the world, and the natives of all those countries as his fellow-citizens ; wishing for them equal rights and therefore as much prosperity as he wishes for his very next of kin ; for only he who has innermost love in his heart knows unconditional joy.

So then, after a little further journeying, it came about that Jesus found himself at last within his own house, and in the welcoming arms of Mary, his mother ; who, because of love and delight and surprise, could not withhold her tears, and wept and laughed and embraced her son in turns ; finding her heart almost too full of conflicting emotions to speak. For in spite of her joy, this re-meeting was tempered by sorrow, seeing that Joseph had died while Jesus was yet in India, and Mary must needs break to him the news of her loss. And every moment that went by, she feared he might say : Tell me where is my father : and yet she could find no words in which to break to him the truth. But Jesus had long ago learnt to commune with the beings of other planes, and long ago he had seen the subtler body of his father, as it lived in joyful activity on the further side of death. So at length it was Jesus, who divining her thoughts, said with a smile of ineffable sympathy : I bring thee good news of my father from the plane of spirits, and he sends by my unworthy hands his benediction and love ; for although no doubt thou too dost see him

from time to time, yet it is well thou should'st know I have learnt of his death, so that thou need'st not fear to speak.

So then, because of relief and happiness, Mary found her voice at last, and having fearlessly related the manner of her husband's death, asked her son hundreds of questions, scarcely waiting, in her eagerness, to hear his replies ; for as soon as he began to tell her of one thing, she went on to something else, and when he tried to enlighten her, she desired to know something further ; every answer invoking such a chain of questions, that finally he laughed aloud, and said playfully : O Mother, meseems thou hast not attained absolute perfection in mental control ; and it is well I am not thy spiritual preceptor, seeing the pupil's flow of language would utterly confuse the teacher, and no headway could be made at all. And Mary laughed a little apologetically, and said : Well then, instead of asking thee further questions, let me rather look at thee, so I may see in what way thou hast changed.

And so as she gazed with affection and admiration upon him, she beheld a man of tall stature, with a face, beautiful not only because of its clear and finely cut features, but because of its expression, which was both benignity and repose and strength and wisdom all combined. For his deep-set eyes of the colour of bluish-grey, were unspeakably clear and calm, seeming, as they looked forth from beneath his brows, capable of fathoming the inmost heart of everybody on which they gazed, yet at

the same time, having fathomed it, incapable of being perturbed in the least degree by whatever might be revealed. And his forehead—from the crest of which chestnut-coloured silken hair, parted in the centre, fell in luxuriant waves on to the shoulders—was high and broad and indicative of great intellect, yet nevertheless without a furrow or wrinkle (20) of any kind ; while his mouth, partly hidden by a dark and pointed beard, broke from time to time into a smile of such irresistible sympathy and kindly humour, that all his beholders must indeed be inspired with admiration and limitless confidence and joyful reverence and love. Moreover notwithstanding his intellect and profound wisdom, there appeared at times something contrastingly childlike and innocent in his many-sided personality, as if the weight of that very wisdom sat so lightly on his shoulders as almost to give the lie to its being there at all. And all the more so, by reason of the fact that it seemed involuntarily to stray into the most ordinary topics of conversation, and in conjunction with a deep but melodious voice, endowed them with an unexpected and compelling charm. Nor was the voice itself other than in perfect accord with the expression of the face ; ranging from accents of the softest tenderness to those of most resonant strength, and thus capable of soothing its listeners at one moment to the profoundest peace, while at another awakening within them both energy and determination, and heroism and zeal. And along with all this, his manner was exceedingly courteous, as also graced

with a slight and picturesque ceremoniousness, adding thereby a strong element of originality to his whole visible being, and so rendering him altogether distinctive from the run of his fellow men.

And as Mary, by reason of her loving scrutiny, evolved this perfectly faithful description of the man she beheld; at length she thought within her heart: Well may I be proud of this veritable god of benevolence and beauty and tenderness and love. But Jesus reading with some amusement her thought, laughed and said: Truly mother-love is blind, seeing but the good qualities and not the imperfections; and perhaps thou would'st alter thy opinion, if thou could'st see me stern and severe, reproving the people for their hypocrisies and feigning to be angered in order to stir up those who cannot be stirred in any other way. And his mother said: I cannot imagine thee angered, for thy face would betray thee all the time. And again he laughed, and replied: He who continuously feels joy, can, as thou sayest, never feel real anger, seeing that anger implies an absence of joy and something totally unpleasant in itself. And yet, at times, as I said, it is necessary to feign anger, and he who can do this can also adjust his facial expression in order to create the necessary effect (*a*). But now conduct me to my brothers in the workshop, that I may see how they look after so many years (21); for assuredly they must have grown

(*a*) A device which some Adepts adopt towards refractory disciples.

into manhood, and I shall hardly recognise them again.

So then his mother did as he asked: and those brothers welcomed him home, asking him endless questions, being especially anxious to know whether he had brought back a fortune as the result of his travels. But when he laughingly answered in the negative, they were crestfallen and disappointed, regarding him as a wastrel and a good-for-nought tramp, who employed the very prime of manhood to no purpose whatever; so that when the next day his mother gave a feast to celebrate his home-coming, inviting all her relations and friends, those brothers refused to attend, making themselves conspicuous by their absence as a protest and a rebuke (21).

4

But although Jesus remained in his own home for a while, yet he had lost all attachment to any one particular place, and became the true wanderer, who cares only to journey about the country, bringing enlightenment to his fellow men. And because of this, it soon came about that he set forth again from his native place, turning this time his steps towards Egypt; for he sought to gain admission into one of the temples of Mysteries there, that he might receive the highest initiations (22).

But it so happened that Jesus was not to travel alone, for a certain Rabbi, with whom formerly

he used to dispute in the temple at Jerusalem, was at the time about to make a journey to that great land of wonders and magic; and as Jesus had learned this during a visit he paid the old man, it was agreed they should set out together. Moreover Rabbi Perachia (23)—for such was his name—was a man of wealth, so that the journey could be undertaken with comparative ease on mules, instead of the more tiring method of tramping all day long in the heat of the sun.

Now the sacred mysteries taught in Egypt were in possession of the *Holy Brotherhood*, and were entrusted only to those select few who were fitted to receive them; being utterly beyond the intellectual conception of ordinary mortals, and only to be perceived intuitively by the spiritual intelligence of man after he has become self-conscious of the Divinity within. And so, to be admitted within the sacred precincts of the great Temple of Divine Knowledge, it was necessary not only to lead an utterly blameless existence but to be possessed of the most unusual talents and strength of character, as also to devote one's life entirely to the practical application of the truths that were taught in this august order (24). And consequently it was exceedingly difficult to gain admission as a candidate, and more difficult still to pass through the trials prescribed, which were of a nature internal rather than external. Nay, so great were the tests, that many who failed to pass them, lost their reason as a result, or paid for their daring with their lives, or else were compelled to remain prisoners in subterranean caves until death.

And so it ıe about that, at the end of the journey, Je sought admission to the temple of this augu rotherhood: and although the first and even second time he applied, the brothers refused, by reason of his persistence and all it implie was finally admitted. And then he was led i the imposing presence of the assembled pri who questioned him searchingly respecting his ject in desiring to enter their strict order; onishing him at the same time to renounce so ing an intention, and warning him of the dangers ıe would incur, should he persist in pursuing this way of obtaining knowledge so secret and so profound. For they said, speaking with impressive deliberation: Know, O strong-headed man, that if thou art once admitted to a knowledge of the great Secret Science, there is no way by which thou canst retreat, and either thou must attain, or else lose thy freedom, and perhaps even thy body; seeing the powers of evil would be aroused by thy endeavours, and will assuredly vanquish thee unless thou art powerful enought to conquer them instead.

But Jesus replied to their admonitions and warn- : O venerable Masters, I am not intimidated t our words, seeing I hold Wisdom, and its iton, dearer than the life in the body, which ings, lost one vehicle will but find another when by y is ripe. For by reason of my travels in acquis ere I sat at the feet of a Master, I am having with something of the secret sciences the time so far, at least, that I know of the India, wh f Karma and Reincarnation, and of acquainted already: in great Law o

many of the mysteries of the human body, and the soul which can never die. And so not in order to learn these things did I come to this august Brotherhood, but that I might be permitted to know the yet higher mysteries which this mighty culture of Egypt has in her keeping, and for the acquiring of which I am ready to sacrifice what is wrongly termed my life (*a*), if so it must be. And yet I have no fears, seeing that fear in itself is an obstacle, blocking the way to attainment, and so must not be admitted into the mind even for the fraction of a moment of time. Moreover, if I were to fail now, I have eternity in front of me, and hence the time must come when I must surely succeed.

And so as he spoke, those old priests looked at one another very significantly; for they saw full well that Jesus was no ordinary aspirant, and that already he had a fund of secret knowledge in his possession, as also great daring, and a natural wisdom, which not for an instant was to be despised. And by reason of all this, they made an end of their warnings and attempts to dissuade him, finally giving him their blessing instead. And then as each one of those venerable priests laid a hand on Jesus' head, he felt, as it were, an electric thrill pass through his frame, which seemed to invigorate him and give him an increase of power. After which he was handed over to a guide, and led away from the great hall.

(*a*) That is, because no man can sacrifice his *life*, which is immortal, but only his *body*.

5

And so Jesus had now become a member of the Egyptian Brotherhood; though only after the endurance of his nerve and bodily courage had been tested by methods involving the employment of certain forces of Nature, the secret of which was known to those priests. And then he was instructed in the occult laws of Nature, as also in Astronomy and medicine and symbology, and many another branch of Learning not revealed in those days to the profane. But after a year had passed away, being ready to enter a further stage on the journey to Enlightenment, a new experience awaited him; for now he was conducted to a grotto, in place of the simple cell-like chamber he had inhabited hitherto. And this grotto was furnished in the extreme of luxury, the lamps even being nourished by perfumed oil, so that not only did they shed a mysteriously mellow radiance throughout the room, but a wonderful fragrance as well. Moreover, the most fair of maidens waited upon him, placing before him sumptuous goods and delicious wines, of which, with irresistible smiles, they invited him to partake, telling him that, having attained to this degree of the order, he might indulge his appetites without incurring any sin. And yet, Jesus was not to be allured by their wiles and witcheries, which left him altogether cold, seeing he not only aspired to something loftier than the pleasures of the senses, but under the tuition of his Master, had acquired, through the practices

of Yoga, control over greed; while as to passion, he had learned to transmute the energy of sex into spiritual power. And so, when after his first day in the midst of these temptations, the evening drew near, those tempters in the form of bewitching maidens, finding Jesus adamant as a rock, disappeared one after another, so that at last he was left to his meditations alone.

And yet it was not to be for long, for as he lay on the couch on which he had thrown himself—having first locked the door for fear of further intrusion—suddenly his attention was arrested by a slight noise. And looking in the direction of the sound, he beheld one of the fairest of women that mortal vision had ever seen; for she had just entered through a secret door, which hitherto had entirely escaped his eye. And she was clad in loose flowing robes, which clung to and revealed her stately noble form; while her head of golden silken hair was adorned with a diadem of sparkling gems. But although her form was beautiful in the extreme, her expression of countenance was equally lovely, seeming, as it did, to mirror a soul full of compassion and solicitude and love; which shone as it were in the cerulean pools of her eyes, as they looked upon Jesus with ineffable sweetness.

And then after he had gazed at her with astonishment and admiration for a very brief moment, she said, in a voice, which in its indescribable mellowness resembled a caress: 'O friend, fear nothing, for I come not to tempt thee, but to save thee from utter destruction instead. For know that

I am no other than the daughter of the guardian of this temple, and by a fortunate circumstance I have chanced to learn that a great danger threatens thy life, by reason of the villainy of these priests who have resolved to kill thee. And this, because thou hast learned some of their most sacred mysteries, which no foreigners, but only Egyptians are permitted to know. And as this very evening they intend to carry out their nefarious design, I have come here, placing thereby my own safety in jeopardy, so only I might save thee from so ill-merited a fate. But what is more, know that I have made sure of thy escape; therefore rise and follow me wherever I may lead; for truly do I admire thy courage and would not have thee die. Then said Jesus, looking at her very calmly: O most beautiful one! I will not dispute the truth of thy words, nevertheless if the priests have resolved upon my death, then I must submit to it, seeing I have taken a vow to obey the laws of this brotherhood, and therefore I am not justified in endeavouring to escape. But that lovely temptress answered appealingly: O strong-headed man! is there not a higher law than the laws formulated by these, or any other priests, and wouldst thou go against the sacred decrees of Nature and so wantonly throw away thy life, committing suicide, as it were, when it is thy Duty to save it? Nay, is it not the hand of Destiny which has sent me to thee, to apprise thee of what thou must do, seeing, if it were not so, I should never have discovered the perfidy in the hearts of these evil

priests? Then said Jesus: O beautiful Lady! art thou so sure as to the workings of Destiny, since who knows but what thy discovery was not a matter of fortuitous circumstances at all, but rather a measure adopted by the Lords of Fate merely to put me to the test? Nay, it is even more likely that the priests themselves, with the best intentions, have contrived the whole affair, as they have contrived other means to try my integrity before; therefore, O Lady, spare thy words, for realising my duty, I must remain here and await my fate, whatever it may be. Then said the lady, feigning embarrassment: O blind one, canst thou not divine what my modesty forbids me to reveal; for it is not the hazardous life of a fugitive I would offer thee, but a life of boundless love and happiness, and luxurious delight. And putting her soft white hand on his arm, she continued with seduction in her voice: For know that I love thee: canst thou not feel that we are twin souls, having been together many lives, and that this is our reunion; which accounts for the sudden access of love within my heart, as undoubtedly it must have come to thine also? And now wouldst thou bury thy beautiful manhood in these tombs, seeking after imaginary joys, when thou canst have the real happiness of love and freedom and riches in the great and glorious world? Then said Jesus: O fair one! though one part of my nature might impel me for a brief moment to fly to thine embrace, yet a higher part deters me: for passion is but transient, and its illusory joys hold no seductions to him who

knows the joys of the spirit, which, unlike what thou canst offer me, are neither subject to change nor decay.

Then suddenly, an alteration came over the face of that woman : and she exclaimed angrily : What ! dost thou reject my offer, and so degrade me in my own eyes ? Knowest thou what a woman whose love is cruelly spurned by a man can do in the extremity of her despair ? And as she spoke she drew from her belt a dagger and pointed it towards her breast. And then she cried : Spurn my love, and assuredly this dagger shall enter my heart ; for without thee I will not live. But know—she hissed in his ear—if I die, my death will cost thee thy life, in that should my dead body be found here in the morning, thou wilt be accused of my murder and suffer the penalty beyond the shadow of a doubt. And then exhausted by the vehemence of her emotion she paused, awaiting Jesus' reply. But after looking at her for a moment utterly unmoved, he said coldly : O temptress ! by thine own words hast thou portrayed the quality of thy love, which is not love at all, but alone desire born of vanity and selfishness ; having no regard for the welfare of its object, and being full of spite and revengefulness instead. And so thou dost merely love thy own self as it were *through* me, seeking to accomplish my downfall, so only thou mayest attain thine own ends.

And then, as he spoke, seeing her threats and wiles were utterly unavailing, that culprit of a woman threw her dagger on the floor, and sinking down at

Jesus' feet, implored his love with streams of tears that seemed as if they would never cease. But Jesus nevertheless was not to be moved: and having raised her from the ground, said at last very sternly: Depart and leave me for ever, for thy temptations have failed. And then, wonderful to say! as she retreated and disappeared, a stream of light entered the room, and the Hierophant, with some of the Brothers, appeared at the door: and after commending Jesus for his victory, they led him away to the larger hall, where he was pronounced worthy of admission to a loftier degree (26).

6

And from then onwards Jesus went through many Initiations, involving tests and trials even stranger than those depicted hitherto; yet by reason of his almost superhuman purity of soul and steadfastness of purpose, he emerged a conqueror every time: for utterly undaunted, nothing could obstruct his path. But the story of all these strange adventures we will not unfold, seeing this chronicle would become too long; moreover, how can words describe that which transpires on super-physical planes, where indeed physical symbols cannot apply? (*a*). And so let it suffice to relate but one

(*a*) Let those who are apt to condemn all mystics on the grounds that they are unable to describe their "sensations" or experiences reflect on this sentence, and remember that even on the physical plane there are hundreds of things not to be portrayed by words, though they may be experienced nevertheless. Who, for instance, could describe sweetness to one who had never tasted anything sweet in his life? Or again the climax of physical passion, to those who are absolutely continent.

ordeal out of the many to which Jesus was subjected, since it was enacted not on the earth-plane, it is true, yet nevertheless in a realm of consciousness bearing so great a similitude (27) thereunto, as not to be utterly beyond the power of words to portray. For one day, as Jesus was plunged in his meditations, he heard a voice which he dared not disobey, saying: Let thy soul (28) come with me whithersoever I may lead. And so responding to that command, it seemed as if he were taken by an unseen hand to a subterranean cave, which was so deep down in the earth, as to be utterly without a single ray of light, so that he could see nothing at all. But what he could not see, he could hear, for all around him the sounds of hissing unpleasantly fell upon his ears. And then, as he advanced a few paces, he stepped upon a slimy living thing, which was in the act of crawling and wriggling over the floor, and which to his consternation immediately twined itself around his leg: so that very shortly the horrible fact dawned upon him, that he was in a den of repulsive reptiles and serpents of every sort; for at the same time, a faint glimmer of light very dimly illuminated the cave, revealing these loathsome snakes, which, twisted together in repulsive knots, or wriggling on the slimy stones, lurked in every corner of the floor. And even as he stood there immovable, regarding with disgust the loathsome spectacle, those snakes began to approach him, as if, resenting his presence, they would attack him; and then they crawled up his legs and twisted themselves

around his body and round his arms and even round his neck and head.

So then, although for a brief moment Jesus was filled with the utmost horror and disgust, yet with a great effort of will he immediately called to his assistance his higher consciousness, remembering that his real Self was utterly impervious to all harm, and that only his lower body was subject to the disgusting embraces of these crawling reptiles; so that he became as it were a spectator, looking on at a part of himself, and resembling an actor acting that which he knows all the time to be unreal. And so, as a result, a superior power seemed to pervade his whole being, investing him, strange to say, with a property which rendered him repulsive to all those crawling and hideous reptiles; for almost immediately, they untwined themselves from his body and disappeared into their holes (29).

And then suddenly like magic the whole scene vanished, and instead of that cave, he saw before him the Hierophant, who seemed by a miraculous power to open his spiritual eyes in such a way that the entire process of Evolution became clear to his understanding. And he saw how in the course of millions of ages, worlds upon worlds had been evolved from one incomprehensible Centre. And he beheld waves of Life passing from planet to planet, and each fiery orb, and each globe, and each solar system had forms peculiar to itself: and all these various forms were manifestations of one and the same supreme Power that men called 'God', and formed out of His own substance (30). And

then he came to see further—though much of this he had learned and experienced before—that the air and earth and water were filled with forms of life, possessing bodies of a species of matter too subtle to be seen by the physical eyes. And some of these were luminous, and others dark; while those beings that inhabited the regions above (31) the sphere of the Earth were of a seemingly supernatural loveliness, utterly beyond the power of words to portray. And furthermore he came to know, what man had been in the distant past, and what he would come to be at a future period of time, far beyond the calculation of men. And he saw how the gross material elements, of which the Earth is now composed, would in the far-off future be changed into a substance of a superior and ethereal kind. And as he beheld all this, he *knew* it to be absolutely true, not as men believe things as the results of the ordinary methods of obtaining knowledge, but by an intuition far superior to the Learning acquired in the world of men (32).

7

Nevertheless, there finally came a time when Jesus left that Temple in Egypt; for both he and the Brotherhood knew full well that to obtain his final Initiation, it was not necessary to remain within the precincts of any given place, however sacred; so that this being the case, Jesus turned his steps once more to Palestine, where the scene of his great mission lay. For his object was to

reveal as much of the truth to his countrymen as was consistent with wisdom (*a*), in order that they might be lifted up from the state of degradation and superstition in which they now were plunged. Moreover, it must be known that Occultism in the highest sense of the word does not consist in merely leading a life of contemplation and high virtue, thus attending to one's own spiritual culture, regardless of the salvation of others; for, when all is said, so to do were to indulge in a refined state of selfishness and nothing more. And so, to labour for the benefit of others and to assist in driving back the powers of darkness and ignorance—thus aiding in the work of ennobling mankind and raising it up to a higher level in the evolutionary scale—is an absolute pre-requisite to the attainment of the goal oneself (33). Besides which, he who has become a Lord of Compassion, cannot, by reason of his own nature, do otherwise than help his fellow-men, that they, too, may attain the unutterable Peace to which he has attained himself. And Jesus had certainly never disregarded this noble ambition even for an instant, seeing that from the very beginning he had endeavoured to teach his fellows such truths as he knew; proclaiming and imparting them in India and everywhere he had gone, so only he might spread the Gospel of Peace to a sorrowing world.

(*a*) To reveal occult truths to the masses would be like placing dynamite in the hands of children, seeing the powers that accrue as a result. Hence to place such powers within reach of the unscrupulous would be to "wreck the universe".

And so, as already said, Jesus left that Temple of the Holy Brotherhood in Egypt, to embark on his great work. But as he slowly made his way towards Palestine, he reflected on the result of all his Initiations, coming to the conclusion he had all but arrived at before, that what Egypt had to impart was but another aspect of the Truth he might equally have acquired in India ; or even by his own efforts, as the result of deep spiritual contemplation. For once having been placed on the right path by that great Yogi at whose feet he had sat in the wood near Benares, the rest was but a matter of time and unceasing effort to reach the final goal.

And yet after all he had learned and endured in Egypt, Jesus knew full well that that goal had not as yet been reached, and that before him lay a great struggle, which must be faced in the solitudes far away from the distracting haunts of men. And so it came about that instead of returning to his native place, Jesus sought the quietude of the wilderness, that he might commune with the Divine ; though, prior to this, he visited John, his cousin, who had also studied in the Egyptian schools and was now living in the hills of Engaddi. And it was by reason of this meeting, that John came to know of the high stage of spiritual enlightenment which Jesus had reached, so that he immediately recognised in him a Master of the most exalted kind. And then when Jesus apprised him of the great mission he intended to undertake, John felt inspired to prepare the people for his advent in

the world of man ; for he felt certain that Jesus must be the Great Prophet and Saviour of the Jewish Nation, the coming of whom long ago the seers had foretold. Nevertheless, Jesus further apprised him that the time of his appearance was not yet, and that first he must struggle to attain a higher degree, living to that end in absolute seclusion for a while. But he promised John that as soon as the time was ripe, he would seek him again, wherever he might chance to be—and then, having made this promise, he went on his way.

Now in Judea there are vast solitudes, where the blazing sun pours forth its hot rays onto an almost treeless desert, and where nothing may be seen but bare rocks and a multitude of loose stones, filling the dried-up beds of the creeks, wherein during the rainy season the waters collect ; though during the rest of the year, no moisture whatever is to be found. Nor are there any signs of life, save perhaps a snake gliding over the sand, or an eagle floating high up in the air watching its prey : so that everywhere around is desolation and death, while all the time overhead expands that great emblem of Infinity, the vast cerulean sky. And to such a place did Jesus retire, as if symbolic of those arid wastes within the human soul, where nothing may be seen but a maze of barren opinions and doctrines, and where reason searches in vain for even the minutest drop of the water of truth (34).

So here in this region of absolute solitude, Jesus embarked on the great struggle to that state of perfect super-consciousness, the end of which is the

perception of the Soul in all Its own glory. And yet seeing this cannot be brought about as long as there is even one single wave, so to say, left on the lake of the mind-substance, even though Jesus had rid himself of all the grosser thoughts and weaknesses of humanity, the subtler desires had still to be overcome. For it must be known that a man may attain to great knowledge and powers, as Jesus had already done, yet, until he can reach the state beyond all relative knowledge—which after all is a combination and not a changeless reality—he may fall into error again. So to this end every thought must be banished from the mind by a supreme effort of the will ; seeing that in that form of concentration where it merely succeeds in quelling the waves in the mind-substance and holding them down, so to say, those waves remain in the shape of tendencies or seeds, becoming waves again in the course of time. But when all such tendencies have been destroyed, nay, almost the mind itself, the perfection of concentration becomes totally seedless, for there are no more seeds in that mind out of which to form this tree of life ; so that then, and then only, is Liberation attained (35).

Now, just as there are men moving about on the surface of the earth in their gross and tangible bodies, so there are other beings moving about with subtle and *intangible* ones, and consequently invisible, save to the trained faculties of the seer. And although many of these entities work for good, yet there exists among them a mighty brotherhood,

known as the Lords of the Left Hand Path, who instead of aiding in furthering the spiritual advancement of the human race, strive against it ; in that their own aims are the acquisition of Power for themselves. And so, seeing the incalculable force for Good that Jesus was about to become, one of these Lords sought to place obstacles in his path, in the form of temptations, so only to deter him from attaining the Goal (36).

And thus it came about, that as Jesus emerged from one of his profound contemplations (37), he began to feel the pinch of hunger, by reason of the fact that the meagre supply of food he had brought with him had become exhausted. So then it was this Lord of the Left Hand Path, thinking to seize the psychological moment, appeared before him in the shape of a tempter and flatterer combined. And he said, as it were (38) : O mighty Devotee ! who hast reached the stage of Sonship with God, why suffer the inconvenience of hunger when thou hast powers at thy command to turn, even these stones into bread ? Nay, what is the use of thy powers if thou dost not employ them to secure thine own welfare when occasion demands ? But Jesus knowing well the danger of succumbing to this form of temptation, was not to be shaken ; for to employ his powers for personal ends was inevitably to impede his further progress : and not only that, but to lose those powers as well. So then, that culprit of a tempter finding himself frustrated in his attempt, tried more subtle means : and he said : O Lord of Compassion, thy mission

is to convince mankind of the truth that this terrestrial world is but a world of illusions, having no real and permanent substance, and that there is a higher state beyond. And yet, how wilt thou convince them of the truth, seeing unless thou dost use most exceptional means, they will never believe thee, and probably only laugh thee to scorn for thy pains. Nevertheless there is a way whereby thou couldst attain thy object, which is none other than by performing wonders and miracles, such as no one has ever beheld before. For seeing that men do not love the Divine Truth, because as yet they do not know it, only if thou canst make its existence plausible by exhibiting feats of wonder, will mankind receive it, and then be willing to exchange their earthly baubles for celestial joys.

But again Jesus was not to be tempted ; and he answered : Divine Wisdon, seeing that it belongs to the realm of Light, cannot descend to the mere intellectual comprehension of mortals ; for those who eek the truth must themselves rise up to its understanding (39). Moreover, it is not a mere *belief* in the Truth which can save mankind, but alone its realisation, born of knowledge, which is indeed an entirely different thing. And so thy proposition does not meet the case ; for the performance of wonders on my part would not give man one iota more of knowledge, but merely awaken an adulation in him towards myself : for just as those who cannot acquire faith without external evidence are not possessed of true knowledge (40), so are those allured by the spectacle of magical feats one

possessed of true knowledge either, being merely glamoured, and nothing beyond!

So then that tempter finding himself again frustrated, adopted other means, working this time on the imagination of his obdurate victim. And he said persuasively: O adamant one! reflect on all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and how if thou wilt only become one of us (*a*) thou canst hold sway over kings and rulers and all mankind; for what after all is more worthy of love and worship than Power (41) against which everything else is folly and aridness, having no worth at all? Then said Jesus coldly: Nay, rather is the love of Power devoid of worth, being born of vanity and childishness, and utterly hostile to true happiness, seeing it belongs to the realm of separateness and illusion and transcience, instead of Unity and Infinity and Love. . . . And now I have endured enough of thy subtleties and temptings, therefore begone and harass me no more.

So saying, with an effort of will, Jesus banished that culprit of a tempter from his sight. And as he did so, lo! a Being of unutterable majesty; a Lord of Compassion and Wisdom and Infinite Love suddenly appeared before his psychic eyes (42). And then it was intimated to his enraptured mind that this mighty One would overshadow him constantly, and with the transcendent power of His Divine Presence, aid him in his great mission on earth.

(*a*) A brother of the Left Hand Path working for the selfish acquisition of personal Power, instead of for the Evolution of the Race.

III

I

Now, as already said, John the son of Elizabeth and Zacharias, having completed his studies in the Egyptian schools, had returned to the Engaddi hills (where formerly he had dwelt), in order there to make his abode. For this wild high place, with its precipitous white cliffs on the one side, and the eternally blue sea on the other, as also its warmth of atmosphere and strange vegetation, suited the rugged tastes of John, who had no care for house and comfort and civilization, being the true hermit and finding the solitude of a cave the ideal human habitation. Moreover he was attracted by the traditions of this wild place and the subtle mental atmosphere it exhaled, seeing that to this wilderness David had once retired, and in one of its very caves had spared the life of the slumbering Saul. And so it came about that, because of the choice of his dwelling-place, and the skins in which he elected to clothe himself, and because of his great strength and size of body, he was called the Hermit of Engaddi or the Wild Man of the Hills.

And then when he was thirty years of age, he went into Jerusalem, and stood up, looking like

a veritable giant in the market place, and attracting large crowds of people, by reason of his strange attire, as also his deep resonant voice. And he cried: Behold the king has come, the king of whom the prophet foretold, and for whom the sages have looked for many a long year: therefore, O Israel! prepare to meet that king (43). And yet, let the rulers have no fears; thinking He seeks an earthly throne, for He comes as the Prince of Peace, and His kingdom is one of virtue and Love, and is within the soul. And having made this strange proclamation, that Hermit of Engaddi disappeared. And the people were much put about, wondering who he might be, so that some strove to follow him; but, to no purpose, seeing he had hidden himself as effectively as if he existed not at all.

And then while the people were still wondering, the time for a Jewish feast-day approached, so that Jerusalem was thronged with Jews from all parts of Palestine, as on these occasions was ever the case. And lo, that Hermit of Engaddi reappeared, and stood this time in the temple court, where he raised his great voice, and said once again: Make ready, O people of Israel! to receive your king! your prince of virtue and Love and Peace; for ye are unprepared, seeing ye have lived in the mire of iniquity, suffering the poor to hunger and moan in your streets, and heeding them not at all. And your neighbours ye have defrauded in your lust for gold, heedless of whether they be friend or foe, so only ye fill your own purses and empty theirs. And even your priests, so that they may

live in ease, have placed heavy burdens upon the people, while your doctors and scribes are but as useless encumberances on the earth, and evil excrescenses on the body of the state. And your rulers are adulterers, extortioners and thieves, caring not a whit for the rights of man. And robbers ply their nefarious profession in the sacred precincts, so that the very halls of this temple are dens of thieves. Therefore hearken, O people of Jerusalem! reform and turn from your iniquitious ways, ceasing to worship God by your voices only, while your hearts all the while worship but mammon; for solely by turning away from all this iniquity can ye prepare to receive your King of Love! So saying, that thunderer ceased, and was lost among the crowd, disappearing in such wise that no one was able to discover whither he went, though they sought for him in all directions (44), For the priests and scribes were consumed with. rage because of his speech, saying: We must search for this infamous orator and put a gag on his mouth once and for all. But the poor and the oppressed, and the humbler people were elated by his oration, and so spoke in his defence, saying: That hermit uttered the truth.

And the next day at the same hour, John stood once again in the court of the temple, and once again with his resonant voice he cried: Make ready, O people of Israel, and prepare to receive your king! But this time before he could proceed any further, the priests and scribes interrupted him, demanding to know the purport of his strange message, and

from whom he had come. And he looked at them with a penetrating gaze, and said, with the suspicion of a smile: Once it was written by the prophets; 'Behold! I send my messenger before thy face to prepare thy way before thee'. And that is my answer to your questions, and it is for you to receive it or not as ye will. Whereupon he turned to the populace and continued his oration, exhorting them repeatedly to reform and mend their ways. But when he had come to the end of his exhortations, he said: In seven days from now, I shall stand at Gilgal, by the ford of the Jordan, where Israel first crossed into the promised land; and those of you who are wise, and so are willing to reform, may come to me there, and in the waters of that stream be washed, as a symbol of the cleansing of the soul. After saying which, he left the temple to enter it no more. But because of the impression he had made on the people and the favour he had won, the priests and scribes were afraid to do him any harm, lest evil should in consequence befall themselves; so they left him to go in peace. And then for many months he went about from place to place, preaching and making converts, and attracting great crowds of people by reason of his compelling oratory, the like of which had never been heard before. But from time to time he returned to the Jordan, in order to perform the rite of baptism, which he had introduced as the symbol of the cleansing of the soul.

2

Now it was in the midst of the summertide, and Jesus, having returned from Egypt, was dwelling with his mother in Cana of Galilee; for she had altered her place of abode, seeing that her younger sons had all married, and she was desirous of returning to the town of her birth (45), that she might once again be among her own people, yet not too far away from Nazareth. For Cana was a little town only two and a half hours distant, and situated at the foot of the mountains which bound the plain of Asochis on the northern side; and although the view was less grand than that to be seen from Nazareth, yet nevertheless it was extensive, and picturesque, seeing it commanded the whole plain, with its little villages and groups of trees and cornfields and meadows; eternally caressing the eye with their variegated colours as they shone beneath a resplendent sun.

And here it was, that, as Jesus was living for a while with his mother, news reached him of John, and his preaching at the ford by the Jordan. And seeing that great throngs of people set out in order to hear and behold this wild man of the hills, and receive baptism at his hands, Jesus set out amongst them. Then having arrived at the Jordan, and seeing John standing on an elevated projection of rock, holding forth with thunderous eloquence to the multitudes before him, Jesus, said, with a smile to the company that was with him: Look upon the man of God, look upon a

great seer—behold Elijah who has returned! But John not perceiving him among the multitudes continued his oration, directing his eloquence first to one sect of people, then to another, and sparing no one. For to the Pharisees and Sadduces he cried: Go and do that which proves your repentance is true. Not enough is it to say ye are heirs of Abraham, for those who do wrong in the sight of God are as iniquitous as any heathen, be they heirs of Abraham or not. Then turning to the tax-gatherers he cried: Be ye honest and upright, never exacting more than is your due. And to the soldiers: Do no violence to anyone nor complain respecting your wages. And to the great masses: Spend not on yourselves all that ye possess, but share it with those who have little, and are in want. But when he had come to the end of his exhortations he added: And heed ye all these things in preparation for One who is to come—aye, One the very latchet of whose sandals I am hardly worthy to unloose—lest because of the impurities of your hearts ye be so blind that perhaps ye may walk with Him even, yet know Him not. So saying he stepped down from the rock on which he stood.

And immediately Jesus made his way through the crowds, and gave that Hermit greeting, with words of fellowship and affection, reminding him he had promised to come when the time was ripe. But John said, allowing a smile to break across his austere countenance: Hardly was it necessary to remind me of thy promise, O Brother and Master, since my inner vision told me of its own accord;

having prompted me to await thy coming this many a long day, or rather, I should say, to await news of thy preaching, that I might set out to hear thee. And Jesus answered, smiling upon his cousin: Nay, I came to hear thee instead, and furthermore to receive baptism at thy hands. Then John made a gesture of astonishment, and dissuasion, saying: Surely that may not be; for what need has an Adept of baptism? Moreover I am totally unsuited to perform the rite, seeing I have not yet attained the highest degree, so that it were more fitting that thou shouldst baptize me instead. But Jesus smiled, and answered persuasively: Let it be so now, since I am asking something which is not without reason, seeing that a teacher does well to instruct by example as well as exhortation.

So then John, without another word, did as he was asked; and he led Jesus down into the river and baptized him in the sacred Name of the Divine Being that only Initiates know how to pronounce. And when he emerged from the waters, John saw with his inner sight a symbolic vision of transplendent glory, and heard as it were a voice of ineffable dulcitude and majesty pronouncing a blessing of infinite Love. Then as Jesus went on his way back towards Cana, a great wave of exultation swept over the soul of that rugged hermit of Engaddi, and he preached to the multitudes an ecstatic sermon, telling them the messenger whom God had sent to reveal the Way had come at last.

3

And then, it gradually came about, that Jesus, by reason of his boundless eloquence, and the irresistible atmosphere of love and wisdom enveloping his entire personality, drew to him all manner of men and women; seeing that only to listen to his discourse was a veritable bath in the waters of peace and contentment, which seemed to wash away all the troubles of the heart, as the cool-running stream washes away the dust and the weariness from the traveller's tired feet. For this surprising incarnation, as it were, of wisdom and benevolence, expounded to his wondering listeners a point of view which was not only utterly novel to their tradition-fettered minds, but the embodiment of stimulation and encouragement and aidfulness all blended into one. And this, because he taught the inherent divinity of man, and the boundlessness of his possibilities; teaching that in the soul of every being resided an unconditional Bliss, which only required the right exercises of the mind to bring it forth into manifestation. And he taught further the true rationale of virtue and the error of vice, in a way that utterly enthralled his listeners, because it surpassed, by its logic and perfect tolerance combined, anything they had ever heard from the mouth of doctor or priest. For he explained to them the great law of Cause and Effect or Sequence and Consequence, showing that the Cosmic Consciousness, or God, which

poetically he expressed by the word Divine Father, was never a punisher and avenger of sins, as the priests had taught, but that man, by reason of that law of Cause and Effect, was solely his own punisher, in that what he sowed he must also reap : since Nature itself was so arranged. Nay, giving a simile he said : He who puts his finger in the flame gets burnt by reason of the nature of fire, and yet the flame is no punisher nor avenger, resenting that man should touch it ; being on the contrary totally neutral, so to speak, and caring not a whit whether he touches it or no. And consequently just as it were foolish to blame the fire for burning and doing an injury, when the foolishness lay solely in the ignorance of man, so is it equally foolish to blame God, when evil accrues by reason of transgression of any of His laws. For that mankind should be something more than puppets, God gave them a degree of free-will, saying as it were : ' If I had created these mortals perfect from the first, that very perfection were an imperfection, seeing that anything in the nature of free-will were totally absent from their make-up, and they would be as mere baubles in My hands. And so I have created them in My own Image, and yet given them the power to blot out and forget that very Image at the same time ; though if they carry this into effect, the evil and miseries which result is their own bringing about and not Mine. For My nature is absolute Bliss ; and he who identifies himself with Me partakes of that Bliss without the shadow of a doubt ; but he

who turns away from Me turns to the absence of Me, which is pain and darkness and sin never discerning any end'.

And so after this manner did Jesus discourse to his listeners, wandering with them at eventide in the cornfields, or sitting by the well, or in their own homes or in his: so that by degrees his fame as a prophet and a seer and a philosopher increased, and people began to follow him about, so only to be near him and hear him speak. But not only did he administer to the soul, but also to the body; healing his friends of their infirmities and his friends' friends, till his popularity knew no bounds. Nevertheless there were many who understood him not at all, and before whom he preserved a silence concerning the deeper spiritual truths of life; while to others, because of their unusual aspirations and purity of purpose, he revealed things that were secret; accepting them as his especial disciples, and giving them gems of wisdom too profound and sacred to present to the masses of mankind. And one of these disciples was called Simon Peter, and another Andrew, his brother, and a third Philip of Bethsaida, the town where Andrew and Peter lived. But it was down by the Jordan, as Jesus had visited John, a little while after his baptism, that he encountered these three men for the first time. For John had said: My teaching is but a preparation for the teaching of One greater than I, and now willingly I resign you to him, if ye will but ask him to accept you as his disciples. Nor have I any fears lest he refuse, seeing in my hands

ye have been faithful to your trust, and he shall know this from my own lips.

And so it came about, that as John conversed with Jesus, and told him among other things of Andrew and Peter and Philip, those three looked on from a little way off, lost in admiration because of his beauty and benignity of countenance, saying: Surely one so beautiful must be the Messias; and now we have found him at last. And because of that admiration they forgot all else, so that as he passed them, having finished conversing with John, they turned and followed him instead of returning to their master. But Jesus finding himself followed, looked round, and, with a smile not untempered with amusement, said: My friends, what is it ye seek? And then those two after a moment's hesitation told him all that John had promised them, and how they hoped that Jesus would be for them a new Master; seeing that John was willing to resign them into his hands. And finally, that they might come to him, they asked where he lived? And Jesus smiled again with a little amusement, replying: As to that (46) know ye need only come and see; though well might I say the whole world is my dwelling place, and one home is as good as another to him who is at peace.

So then he took them to a cave near by, wherein at the time he was resting, previous to returning to Cana. And he gave them to eat of dates and figs and carob bread, and discoursed to them in a way they had never heard before, nor hardly imagined even in a dream; so that they remained with him

that whole day, utterly loth to tear themselves away. But the following morning Jesus returned to Cana, bidding them for the time-being farewell, so that they might return to their several occupations; seeing that the duties of the earth must never be wholly sacrificed even for the incomparable fellowship of a master: though it was arranged that in a little while they should re-join him when those duties would permit.

4

Now it came about, shortly after Jesus had returned to Cana, that one of his many followers got married, and after the manner of the Orient gave a feast. And the ceremonies according to the Oriental custom began at twilight, when the bride, enshrouded from head to feet in a flowing veil, and robed in her finest robes, and garlanded with flowers, and heralded by a torchlight procession with song and dances, was borne away and brought to the bride-groom's home (47). And to this feast, Jesus and his mother were bidden among the honoured guests; for apart from his love and admiration for Jesus, the feast-giver hoped he might grace the ceremony with a little discourse fitting to the occasion; the more so, as being himself a man not over rich in worldly goods, he had reflected: What my feast lacks in the way of lavishness, it shall at least make up for it in the way of wisdom and wit. So then, when the propitious moment arrived, the feast-giver called upon Jesus for a little

discourse relative to marriage and love ; accompanying his request with a few words to the assembled company, which were spoken in order to do honour to the Seer in their midst. And when he had finished, Jesus bowed and gently smiled in acknowledgement as he rose from the settle on which he reclined.

Then he began : Know, O my friends, that true love is based upon recollection, being the re-meeting of two souls who have lived together in harmony and affection for many lives past (*a*). For verily love is the strongest of all chains, and can never be broken, seeing that it is of God and therefore eternal, and so formed, as it were, in heaven. Nevertheless only the wise can discern what is true love and what is false ; and what is the true marriage of souls, and what is but a make-believe and an illusion, having no permanence nor intrinsic value whatsoever. For the former is totally void of the sense of possession, with its attendant pains of jealousy, vanity and selfishness, while the latter is full of these evils, and consequently a source of apprehension and sorrow and pain, seeming never to have an end. Nor can any priest by the ceremony of marriage transform the false into the true, seeing rather does he render it more false, by invoking the name of the All-Pure, that It may bless the impure. For the ceremony of marriage on earth is the symbol of the true marriage in heaven,

(*a*) It is admitted by many thinkers, that reincarnation was recognised by the people of Jesus' time, and only disappeared from the domain of religious beliefs at a later period, when the teachings of Jesus had become degraded through ignorance.

and to employ that symbol for the sanctification of evil is to defile that symbol without the shadow of a doubt. And because all this is so, especially blessed are the bride and bridegroom amongst us, in that I know full well they are united by the true spirit of love, so that between them is harmony and understanding. And when there is understanding there is always charity, seeing that the two are one and charity is the sense of feeling-with as well as feeling-*for*, without which there can be no true happiness, in wedded life, nor in any other life either. Nay, know that the greatest of all things is charity, not only because it is a beautiful and peaceful feeling in itself, but also because it makes us immune from the pains of all wrongs, and makes us ready to forgive, even before there is anything to forgive at all. And Jesus allowed a smile of humour and affection to cross his lips for a moment, as he looked at the bride and bridegroom and said : For even the most united must needs forgive one another from time to time, seeing that none of us is perfect ; and yet where there is true love, far from it being a pain to forgive, rather is it a pleasure, augmenting that love instead of decreasing it, by reason of the admiration and gratitude it calls forth on the part of the one who is forgiven, and the delight of affording relief and contentment on the part of the one who forgives.

And then, having said this and many another wise saying, thus charming his listeners by the mellowness of his voice and the beauty of his face and the poetry of his words, Jesus ceased : while

in consequence there arose a murmur of approbation on the part of the assembled guests.

Then just as Jesus was resuming conversation with those around him, suddenly his mother came to his side, and said with some concern in her voice : The wine is exhausted ; and now what is to be done, canst thou not help us in any way ? And Jesus, replied with the suspicion of rebuke in his tone (48) : Lady, that is hardly an affair of ours, seeing it ill behoves us to criticise the hospitality of our host. Then for some time they spoke together in an undertone, Mary trying to prevail upon him to use the powers she knew he possessed, and he disinclined to comply, thinking the time for exhibiting those powers as yet not ripe. But realising the dilemma in which his host was placed, by reason of the almost sacred duty of lavish hospitality in the East, he yielded at length.

Now, near the entrance of the house, there were six large water jars of stone, covered with fresh leaves, so that the water contained in them might be kept cool ; for this water was used by everyone who entered the house, to wash his hands and his feet, after the custom of the time. So remembering these jars which were now half depleted, Jesus motioned to the servants that they should fill them again to the brim, which in a little while they accordingly did. And then with an effort of will and occult knowledge combined, Jesus influenced that water in such wise, that lo ! it blushed, as it were, and became wine. And so mellow and pure was that wine, that when the servants, at the further

bidding of Jesus, had poured it into vessels, and then filled the empty goblets of the guests, and the ruler of the feast had tasted it, he said to the bridegroom : Surely most people when they give a feast, hand round the best wine first, but you, with great forethought, have reserved it to the last. But the servants who had witnessed the proceedings thought to themselves as they heard him : Little does he know, for he has not seen what we have seen. And yet, was it a trick or something in the nature of a surprise-gift for the bridegroom, or what ? And as soon as those servants were amongst themselves, there arose a perfect storm of argumentation, which seemed as if it never would come to either a decision or an end. For many of them put forth arguments to explain away what they had seen, which made an infinitely greater demand upon credulity than the fact itself (*a*), while others hotly contested such unconvincing negations, and maintained : Nay, he is a magician without a doubt ; while still others declared : Certainly he must be the Messias, the coming of whom the Prophets have so long ago foretold.

And finally it came about that the ruler of the feast and some of the guests got to hear of the contest, so that they went to Jesus in much amazement inquiring : What is this that we have heard ?

(*a*) This tendency of men is to be met with nowadays in connection with spiritistic phenomena. In fact, ' the credulity of the sceptic ' often affords a matter for surprise ; seeing the brain-splitting explanations he puts forward to negate such phenomena, merely because they are outside the gamut of everyday experience.

But Jesus made light of the matter (49), and said: What after all is wine and what are grapes? They are but certain kinds of thought, as it were, made manifest; and he who understands the control of Nature's subtler forces can bring both grapes or water or wine into manifestation without much difficulty, providing the conditions be propitious. For there are no such things as miracles in the world, seeing that all is in accordance with the Divine Laws, so that what seems as a miracle is but the control of cosmic force, in a manner unfamiliar to the general run of mankind. And now the least said about this matter, the better; for wonder-working is not the ideal to be aimed at, but spiritual Emancipation, and thus union of the individual soul with the All-soul called God. And although many tried to prevail on him to disclose more, he courteously but firmly refused; and so the matter dropped, nothing more being said. But in the hearts of many of those guests was amazement and admiration and awe, so that not a few would have set aside all else, and become his disciples then and there (50).

5

And in a few days time it came about that a certain Pharisee, named Simon, having learned of the wisdom and powers of Jesus through some of his friends, invited him in company with others to eat at his house, that he might judge of the truth of hearsay for himself. And he was a pious and

proud and puritanical man, after the manner of his sect ; performing good actions for the sake of duty and celestial reward, rather than for the sake of love, of which there was but little in his heart. Now it must be known, that hospitality being the very first of Eastern virtues, that Pharisee must needs live with open doors, not only literally because of expediency, but figuratively as well. And it so happened that as the company sat at meat, certain idlers collected outside, to look on at the feast, and to catch such crumbs of conversation as might come their way. And amongst those onlookers was one, Mary, a courtesan of Magdala, who being weary and miserable and oppressed by reason of her vocation, yearned for a priest or Master who might bring her peace ; and yet because of intolerance and selfrighteousness, all to whom she had turned hitherto, only upbraided her and spurned her, and sent her utterly empty and disheartened away. And then it had finally come about that through hearsay, she learnt of a teacher, who was said to be the embodiment of charity and gentleness and wisdom, and who went about comforting the stricken in body and the sick in soul : so that she had thought within herself : Ha ! at last I can find one who will perhaps take pity even on an outcast like me. And then hearing that the name of this Rabbi was Jesus, and that he lived in Cana of Galilee, she had set out from the little town of Magdala, on her quest, to arrive just in time to learn he sat that very moment at meat with a Pharisee of the town.

And so in this way it had happened that Mary came to stand among the onlookers outside the house, travel-stained and tearful because of fatigue and weakness and ill-health, and also a little fear. And so, as she waited, poised between hesitancy and longing, listening to Jesus' discourse, and watching his face, yet all the time fearing to intrude, at last there came a moment when he perceived her standing there, the very picture of sorrow and dejection and fatigue. And he looked at her with a look so gentle and compassionate and full of love, that instantly she took courage, and entering the house, sank down at his feet (*a*) with an outburst of emotion that found vent in a stream of tears. Then she drew forth from a box of ointments and perfumes, which she always carried by reason of her vocation, a little phial of precious and fragrant nard, and poured its contents on his feet, which at the same time she washed, as it were, with her tears, so that she needs must use her long overhanging hair as a towel wherewith to wipe them away. But meanwhile, Jesus, although he watched her with a kindly smile, said neither a word nor made a sign. But that Pharisee, Simon, who had invited Jesus, took no great pains to hide a look of utter disapproval, and disgust, as he maintained an ominous silence; for he regarded the presence of this woman as an intrusion altogether unwarranted upon his house and company, while at the same time he was vexed with Jesus

(*a*) The custom of the day was to recline at table, not sit down as we do.

for permitting such a demonstration without remonstrance of any sort. Moreover he thought within his heart: Surely if this man were a true seer, he would know what manner of woman defiles him by her touch; seeing she is the very worst of outcasts, and no man of sanctity would let her come near him at all.

And as he was thinking these thoughts, Jesus turned and saw the disgust on his face, and allowing a slight smile of indulgence to cross his lips, he said: Simon, my friend, let me put before thee a problem. And Simon replied: Master, proceed; what is thy problem? Then said Jesus: Know that once there was a certain rich man, who was not only rich but wise and benevolent at the same time. And this man possessed two friends who were unfortunate in their affairs, so that out of the kindness of his heart he lent them money; to the one forty pieces of silver and to the other fifty, wherewith to pay off their debts. But it so happened that the one to whom he lent the lesser sum was of a mean and selfish and unloving nature, whereas the other was generous and kind and full of affection and gratitude; especially for his benefactor; taking every opportunity to express that gratitude and show his love in countless little ways. Nevertheless when the appointed day for repayment was at hand, neither this man nor the other had the wherewithal to meet the debt, so that their creditor in the generosity of his heart said to the one: Very good, then pay me a portion of the debt in a month from to-day. But to the other he said: Pay me not

at all, for I absolve thee altogether. Now tell me, Simon, was it the niggardly man or the generous and loving man that this wise creditor absolved? And Simon answered constrainedly: I imagine the generous one. Then said Jesus: Thine answer is correct (52). And with a look full of meaning and a reproachful smile he continued: And now, dost thou see this woman? When I entered thine house as thy guest, thou gavest me no water to wash my feet, yet has she washed them with tears and wiped them with her hair; thou gavest me no kiss, yet this woman, since the moment she came in, has hardly ceased to kiss my feet; nor didst thou anoint my head, yet this woman has given me her precious balsam to anoint even my feet. And so I say, her sins which were many, are forgiven, for she has loved much, aye, not only man but all living things (53), but conversely, to him who loves but little, little is forgiven. And then he turned to her, and said, with a look of ineffable gentleness: Thy sins are forgiven thee, be at peace. But those who sat at table said erroneously (*a*) within themselves: Strange, that this man should take upon himself to forgive sins also; nevertheless they were silent; while Simon on his part was embarrassed, feeling himself rebuked.

And then when Jesus was once more alone with his disciples—for the woman had already left him and gone on her way—he said to them: Find me that woman and bring her to me that I may

(*a*) *Erroneously*, because Jesus said: 'Thy sins are forgiven thee', *not* '*I* forgive thee thy sins'.

help her. But those disciples answered: We will do as thou sayest, but nevertheless such a one is not fit to receive tuition at thy hands, for everyone knows she is a notorious sinner; though Master is the judge. And a shade of disappointment crossed the face of Jesus as he said: Ye surmise wrongly, and your judgments are altogether at fault, as ye might have learned from my parable had ye but more understanding. And he began to scold those disciples, so that they felt ashamed, chiding themselves for not having held their peace. For he said: Did I not show you how that woman's heart was full of love, so that rather are her sins the defects of her qualities than iniquities in themselves; seeing that love is the highest of all virtues and needs but directing into the right channel. Nay, how can anyone love God who has no love in his or her heart at all; and how can anyone feel the Bliss of the heaven which is within, if he be devoid of feeling altogether; and further, how can love and feeling be directed into higher channels if they have no existence whatsoever in the heart? And all this being so, I tell you, that woman, though she be a harlot, is far nearer the Kingdom of Heaven, as it is symbolically called, than the most righteous Pharisee who commits no sins at all: being cold and calculating and utterly without love; as also full of prejudices and pride and conventions, so that he can understand nothing of the doctrines of the spirit. For learn, that it is from the heart that the spiritual understanding comes, and not from the brain, and that consequently

only the pure in heart, meaning the selfless and loving, can realise God, who is Himself Love. And thus are sinners, such as that woman, not only, because of their rich love-nature, the fittest candidates for spiritual emancipation, but also because of their many other qualities ; aye, because of their experience, their daring, their contempt for petty conventions, their sufferings and many other aids to advancement in the science of God. For learn further, that the sinner is conscious of his sins, as was that woman, most often yearning to be rid of them all the time, yet knowing not the method ; but the righteous on the other hand, is utterly *un*conscious of his sins, deeming himself to have no sins at all, let alone desiring to be rid of them. And so does every teacher say : I come to help the sinner to reform : and not, I come to call the righteous to repentance ; seeing the latter have no use for the teacher whatsoever, nor the teacher for them, in that he cannot teach those who will not be taught. And now, therefore, do as I ask, and at an auspicious moment bring that woman to me. And learn in future never to judge ; knowing that appearances are deceptive and like a pool covered with weeds, which may, below its surface, contain the purest of water. So saying, Jesus having soundly scolded those disciples for their want of insight, instantly banished all sign of feigned (54) vexation from his face, and bidding them, with a smile, farewell for the time-being, wended his way back to his mother's house. But in a little while, that fallen woman of Magdala

became his disciple and learned of the Science of the Soul (55).

6

Now there was by the Lake of Galilee, in a quarter called the Garden of Abundance (56), (by reason of its veritable carpet of flowers, its verdure, its bright winged birds and fragrant oleanders), a lively and thronged and incomparably beautiful little city, Capernaum by name. For its marble buildings reflecting themselves in the cerulean waters of that almost paradiseal lake, with its gay fleet of fishing boats and background of sylvan hills, engendered a dream of beauty so supernal, as hardly to seem an earthly reality at all. And yet far from being an unsubstantiality, it was in those days a place of much commerce, and industry and moil and mart ; containing inhabitants of divers nationalities, because of its profusion of vines and oranges and almonds and figs and pomegranates, all of which were exported to other lands. But not the least of its activities was the exportation of fish, seeing the lake held an abundance so great as well-nigh to reach the infinite itself.

And so it came about by the decrees of destiny, that Jesus' disciple, Peter, had his home in this bosom of luxuriance, as also others who had become disciples as well. And it further came about, that to this home, Jesus one day set forth : for Peter loved, beyond all else almost, to have his cherished Master under his own roof ; thus being

enabled to play the host, not only to the Master himself but even to those more humble ones who came to seek wisdom at his feet—seeing that Fame had heralded his approach, and there were many who stood, so to say, on the very tip-toe of expectation, clamouring that they might be asked to meet so exalted and imposing a guest. Nay, after Jesus had arrived, the news had even spread through the little city that a king was in its midst—Judah's long expected king—for such is the nature of gossip that it ever centres itself round the grandiose, in its earthly form, having little or no conception of anything higher. But when Jesus was told of these rumours, he said with a regretful smile: The way of the untutored is ever that of idolatry, and the worshipping of the form instead of the spirit. And for this reason man has misunderstood the Law and the Prophets, turning, by reason of their carnal minds, the poetical into the literal, and the symbolical into the physical.

Nevertheless as Jesus sat one evening amidst a circle of listeners, he discoursed to them on the Kingdom of the Divine Realm. And he said: Know that every soul is as it were a kingdom, and for every man there is a king, and that king is the All-Love called the Christ, and the body of that man is a garment of that king but not the King Himself (57). For know that neither is man his body, nor his emotions, nor yet his mind, but something behind all these, and capable of controlling them and putting them on or leaving them aside at will. And to know that, is already to catch a

glimpse, however shadowy and inadequate, of that king who is the true self of man, and of nature infinite and immortal and full of bliss. And for this reason do all *Divine Philosophies say in essence : O man ! know Thyself ;* for to know that Eternal Self is to be saved, and have immortal life, while to know it not, is to drown in the sea of worldliness and woe. And then he went on to tell them how by stilling the emotions and the vagaries of the mind, they might come to know the eternal Self or the Christ within, and so attain to the true Bliss-Consciousness and Peace, which surpasses all mental understanding, seeing it is utterly beyond the plane of words, and hence beyond description as well.

And it so happened, as Jesus, the following day, was walking with one or two of his followers by the side of the blue lake, watching the fishermen busy with their boats, that a certain nobleman who lived some little way outside Capernaum, came to him ; being brought by one of Jesus' friends. For his son was mortally ill, and he was devoured by anxiety lest he should die : but having heard of the powers of Jesus, he thought to beg him to use those powers and bring that son back from the very gates of death, seeing he had swooned away. And as he stood before Jesus to make his request, he was well-nigh trembling with agitation, and scarcely able to command his speech, being torn as it were between hope and grief and fear, lest even as he spoke his son might be dead. But Jesus looked at him with eyes of unutterable calm, contrasting strangely with his own agitation, and thereby

putting him almost to shame. And then he said slowly, turning to his disciples : Unless ye see signs and wonders, meseems ye will not understand. But that nobleman, with entreaty in his voice, said : Sir, I beg of thee make haste and come with me ere my child die. And again Jesus looked at him with unutterable calm, and replied slowly : Not so, return thy way, for thy son is alive and will very soon be well. Then that nobleman in his relief and delight, almost forgot to thank his benefactor, so anxious was he to behold his son again ; for the sound of those words uttered with such gentle assurance left him no doubt as to the truth ; so that he hastened away, hardly knowing how to express the gratitude in his heart. And as, after a while, he neared his own house, he saw his servants coming to meet him with joy depicted on their faces, crying as they approached : Lord ! thy son is alive, and has come out of his swoon. Then cried the father with delight : When did he come out of his swoon ? And they told him the exact time the Master had said ' Thy son is alive '.

But meanwhile Jesus, having smilingly watched him receding from sight, turned and walked with his friends along the lake-side, under the shadow of the trees ; discoursing on the connection between faith and will, and the value of both in the Science of God. For he said, taking the fishermen busy launching their little crafts as an example : Think you one of these men would set out to traverse this lake, had he not the necessary faith to realise he could reach yonder side ? Nay, truly, faith is the

pre-requisite to all action, being the very mother of will, without which nothing could be accomplished at all.

And then as he sauntered along, he came upon Peter and Andrew, just as they were engaged in casting their nets into the sea. And giving them greeting, he looked on for a while, to watch how they set about their work, chatting to them on many things connected with fishing, and watching the shoals that swam near the surface of the sea. And then he said, humourously: To fish for fish is good; and yet if ye will but follow well my teachings, I will make you fishers of men, so that with Divine Joy as the bait, ye may then fish in the sea of worldly illusions and catch men for the Kingdom of the Real. And as those disciples looked at him and heard his words, they thought within themselves: What indeed in the world can compare with the society of this incomparable Master? And now, out on these tedious nets and this fishing! enough of it for to-day! And immediately they forsook their nets, drawn to his side like magnets, utterly powerless to resist; although they had been with him but a few hours before.

And then as they all sauntered together along the lake-side, under the shadow of the trees, they came upon two other disciples, James and John, who were sitting in a boat with Zebedee their father, a little way out from the shore, and engaged in mending their nets. And Jesus called to them a greeting, so that they, too, left their father and their nets and

their boat, heedless of all else save the delight of being in the company of their Master, and beholding his loving and majestic face, or hearing his discourse upon the Science of the Soul.

So then as the little group was complete, they wandered out of reach of the populace; making for the shade and seclusion of a wood near by, where Jesus taught them and enlightened them on many things. And he said: Learn, that the worldly man is sure of nothing save the objective world which surrounds him, and which he deems to be real, though like a shifting sand-bank it be changing all the time. And learn further that he is also conscious of thoughts and perceptions which he speaks of as the subjective world, deeming it to be his very self, and not suspecting for a moment that beyond the plane of the senses and of thought, there is the plane of spirit. But know, that the more a person weans himself from worldliness, the more clearly will he perceive that the objective world surrounding him, is, so to say, hollow and unreal, and that thoughts and sense-perceptions are likewise objective, in that they are external to the spirit, which is *pure* Consciousness, totally freed from the excitation of these senses and thoughts (58). And now, my brothers, mark well, that this pure Consciousness is the true Self or Spirit of man; the Lord and Ruler of all: and he who by turning from without will turn within, making himself one with that Self; that Heavenly Father; that Divine Spirit; unspeakably blissful and free from change, will know It to be—aye,

without the shadow of a doubt—the most *real* of all things (59). For this Pure Consciousness or Kingdom of Heaven, as we may poetically call it, is like a treasure concealed in a field, the which when a man having found it, hides it away, and because of his great joy, goes forth and sells all he possesses, so only he may buy that field, knowing how great will be his wealth. For having once tasted of that indescribable bliss in his heart, even for the fraction of a second, he will gladly give up all the pleasures of riches and fame and every other worldly joy, that he may taste it again and taste it for evermore.

So then Jesus, having told those disciples this parable, and given them some further instruction respecting the way of attainment, made his way back to the town, that he might teach for a while in the synagogue. For it was a Thursday, and a market day, by reason of which a goodly concourse of people had flocked into the town; moreover the service on that day was always a little longer than usual, and learning that a great Rabbi was elected to speak, the congregation had become augmented far beyond its ordinary size. And so at the appointed time, Jesus entered the synagogue; an oblong building divided by pillars into aisles, where at the south end, looking towards Jerusalem, was the ark, veiled by a curtain: being the chest wherein the sacred books were kept, and in front of which the Elders ranged themselves with their faces towards the congregation; while in the centre there was a platform, whereon stood a reading-

desk for those who were to pray or read or preach as the case might be (60).

And so, on this platform, Jesus stood, and according to the custom of the time and the mode of worship, recited two ancient prayers, proclaiming them in so rich and majestic a voice, that all their latent beauties (well nigh annihilated by much empty repetition) came forth once more, like forgotten strains of music reheard and enjoyed anew. For with a strange and compelling diction he prayed :

Blessed be thou, O Lord, king of the world, who formest the light and createst the darkness, who makest peace and createst everything ; who in mercy givest light to the earth and to those who dwell thereon, and in Thy goodness, day by day and every day, renewest the works of creation. Aye, Blessed be the Lord our God for the glory of His handiwork and for the light-giving lights which He has made for His praise.

And then Jesus paused for a moment, ere with the second prayer he continued :

With great love hast Thou loved us, our Father and our King. For the sake of our fathers who trusted in thee, and to whom thou taughtest the statutes of life, have mercy upon us and teach us, that we may give thanks to Thee and declare Thy unity in love ! Yea, blessed be the Lord who in love did choose his people Israel !

And then having ended these prayers, and passed to the front of the ark, Jesus proceeded to read certain passages from the Law, and to enunciate certain benedictions, after which he sat himself down and

began his sermon. And so majestic was he, and so redolent of poetry and beauty of phrase and simile, and so totally compelling, that his listeners were lifted out of themselves, so to say, and thought within their hearts: Truly this man possesses the oratory of a great Master, and speaks with learning and enlightenment and authority totally unlike the scribes; so that when the service was ended, the Elders approached him, requesting him to speak again on the coming Sabbath day.

And then having left the synagogue, Jesus returned to his temporary lodgement at Peter's house, together with Andrew and James and John, who while they walked, were constrained to give vent to their admiration, though he waved it aside, saying with a grave smile: Let him who loves me truly, show me that love by following my teachings; for verily obedience is the truest form of admiration and the only form for which I care.

Now it so happened that Peter's mother-in-law had been ailing since the morning, so that she lay in bed, totally unfit to fulfil her household duties; being stricken with fever. And as they entered the house, Peter came forward much concerned, not only because of her illness, but also because there was no food prepared for the evening meal. But Jesus immediately pacified him with a few cheery words, saying: Take me to thy mother-in-law and let us see what can be done, for who knows, the matter may not be very serious after all. So then Peter gratefully conducted him to her bed-chamber, where she lay burning with the heat of

her fever, and much discomforted by reason of her aching head, which throbbed incessantly, giving her no respite whatever. But when Jesus saw her, he smiled down upon her as he stood beside the couch, looking the embodiment of sympathy and gentle cheer, like the physician who has acquired the very *finesse* of a bedside manner, and whose presence in itself is sufficient to make his patient well. And he said cheerily : How now, good friend, what is this, and how comes it that we see thee in so sorry a condition ? And so saying, he took her by the hand, and gently lifted her up. And lo ! suddenly as if by the force of magic, her head ceased to ache and her limbs to burn, so that she felt strong and well. And she looked at him with an astonishment so great, that he laughed and patted her hand, waving the matter aside, by telling her her sons were hungry and wanted their supper, so that she must hasten to get up ; whereupon he withdrew from the room.

And then towards night-time, after they had all supped, as he sat in the cool of the evening before the house talking with his disciples, a little crowd collected outside ; for people had brought to him all manner of invalids including even the demented among the number, that he should heal them, which accordingly he did. But seeing his fame and popularity were becoming burdensome, and almost a hindrance to his mission, he set forth in the morning ere the sun had risen, making for a solitary place, where he might pursue his meditations undisturbed.

IV

I

Now having left Capernaum, Jesus, by slow stages, preaching and working many wonders in the form of healing the sick as he made his way, came at length to Jerusalem ; for it was the feast of the Passover, and it was necessary for his Mission that he should take advantage of the vast multitudes collected together. So then having taken up his abode with one Jude, a Sadducee (61), he entered the temple courts at the appointed time ; for it had been ordained he should preach, seeing that here again, his fame had preceded him like a fanfare of trumpets precedes a king. And it so happened that Philo (*a*) had come from Egypt to attend the feast ; and he was one much respected by the people by reason of his reputation and learning and wisdom, so that his words carried great weight. And as he discoursed to them with great eloquence, he made Jesus the subject of a mighty eulogy, telling them this Jesus of Nazareth stood as a Sage above all sages of the world, and was the Messiah long predicted by the Prophets, and a World-Teacher who had come to show the way to Eternal Peace. And then after a little while,

(*a*) *Ibid.* Was this the famous Philo ?

Jesus himself stood up in the Temple and confronted the mighty audience, his face bearing that expression which was the very incarnation of love and sympathy and power and wisdom, and his voice ringing forth through the vast halls, like an essence of the music of the Gods wafted down onto earth. And then as he neared the end of his oration, he said: And know, that blessed are they who suffer many experiences in life, for they shall be made perfect through suffering, and shall be as the angels of God in Heaven, and shall die no more, nor shall they be born any more, for birth and death no longer will have dominion over them (62). Nay, they who have suffered and overcome, shall be made pillars in the Temple of God, and they shall go out no more. But I say to you, that unless ye be born again of water and of fire, ye cannot see this Kingdom of God.

And on the greater part of that vast assembly he made an utterly ineradicable impression; sowing seeds in their souls, which life after life (*a*), grew into beautiful and deathless spiritual flowers, bearing an abundance of fruit, even unto this day; but in others, by reason of their prejudices and hardness of hearts, and materialism and conventionality, he awoke opposition and jealousy and hatred instead. For, said they within themselves, He sins against our sacred traditions, and would have us forgive, nay, even love, our enemies, and be full of tolerance towards sin; and carry out many another thing which would cause chaos

(*a*) (*i.e.* future incarnations.)

and confusion and the fostering of inquity on this earth of man, so that the whole social world would be turned upside down. But Jesus, all heedless of their thoughts and misconceptions and travesties of his teaching, after having made an end of that mighty sermon, returned to his own lodgement in the house of Jude.

Now it so happened that among the listeners present that day, there was a certain teacher of the Jews, named Nicodemus: and he was a devout and learned man; though fear of the opinions of others stood in the way of his emancipation, and tarnished his learning, just as a sod of grass thrown into a streamlet obstructs the even course of its flow, and renders it muddy at the same time. And so, although he had been uplifted and improved by Jesus' doctrine and eloquence, yet too apprehensive was he openly to make, as it were, confession of his faith by joining the adulating throng, but instead he resolved to seek Jesus at night time, under the cover of darkness, that he might not be seen. And so he set forth accordingly, and found Jesus quietly conversing with Jude, previous to retiring to rest. And bowing before him, he gave him greeting,—which Jesus courteously returned,—and then said: Well do we know, O Master, thou art a teacher inspired of God, for no man could teach as thou hast taught, nor do the marvellous works that thou hast done, save God be with him. And Jesus smiled patiently, but answered nothing; waiting for him to proceed. Then said Nicodemus: And yet one thing thou didst say which I have failed

to comprehend, namely that unless a man be born anew he cannot perceive the Kingdom of God. But surely a man cannot be born when he is old, thus entering a second time into his mother's womb ? And again Jesus smiled patiently, as one smiles on a child who asks foolish questions ; and he said : Know, that unless a man be born of water (*a*) and the spirit, he cannot become one with the Kingdom of the Divine ; for that which is born of flesh is merely the child of flesh, but that which is born of spirit is spirit in itself. So be not surprised that I told thee thou must be born again ; for just as the wind blows wheresoever it may, and thou, though hearing the sound, art totally unable to say from whence it comes, nor yet whither it may go, so is it with the spirit and everyone born of the spirit. Or again as the light shines from the East even to the West, and out of darkness the sun rises, going down again into darkness, so it is with man from the ages to the ages. For when it comes from the darkness, it is that he has lived before, and when it goes down again into darkness, it is that he may rest for a little while and then afterwards exist again. So through many changes must ye all be made perfect, and be like him of whom it is written in the Book of Job, ' I am a wanderer, changing place after place and house after house, until finally I come to the City and Mansion which is Eternal '. (63).

Then Nicodemus looked puzzled and said : Nevertheless, how can this be ? And Jesus

(*a*) *i.e.* that water which quenches the thirst for righteousness.

answered, not without amusement: What! and thou art a teacher in Israel, yet dost not know these things? (64) And then suddenly becoming grave, he added slowly and impressively: Truly we are telling thee that of which we know without any doubt whatever, testifying of the very things we have experienced in our own selves; and yet thou and others are not prepared to receive our testimony. And so if I have told thee of those things perceivable while yet in the body, and thou art unable to comprehend, how shalt thou understand if I tell thee of those more mysterious things enjoyable after the soul has shed its sheath and attained to the all-pervading Heavenly Peace (64)? And yet if thou canst but comprehend, know, that, seeing the spirit in man came from this all-embracing Heaven—which is God—to that Heaven will it ultimately return. And this being so, just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the spirit in man be lifted up, and be, as it were, the pole-star of all our thoughts, and our very highest aspirations in every concern of life. For he who achieves this lifting up, will assuredly not perish in the sea of worldliness, but attain to the æonian Life of unchanging Peace (66). And so saying, Jesus ceased; and Nicodemus after thanking him for his enlightening discourse, went back, wondering, to his own house.

And on the morrow, almost immediately after dawn, Jesus bade farewell to his host, and set out with one or two disciples towards Judea, that among other things he might visit his friend, John

the Baptist, seeing that Hermit of Engaddi was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, and Jesus had many weighty matters to discuss with him in the solitude of his habitation. Moreover, in among those hills was a retreat of the Essenian Brotherhood, to which Jesus retired for meditation and solitude, seeing his work was not limited to this earthly plane of consciousness. Nevertheless he did not remain long among the Judean hills, but by way of Bethlehem and Jericho and other towns and villages (in all of which Jesus taught and ministered to the sick), he came at length to a place, named Sychar, in the very heart of the beautiful regions of Samaria, and nestling between the two mountains, Ebal and Gerizim, so that it lay in a valley, yet nevertheless was high above the sea. And it was of surpassing beauty; adorned with gardens rich in walnut and mulberry and apricot and almond and peach and fig and pomegranate trees (67). Moreover it was garlanded, as it were, by the intertwining branches of the vine, from which the cluster of grapes hung down like pendants formed of oval-shaped pieces of crysophrase, kissed by the red and golden rays of the rising sun (*a*). Nor was it merely a beauty for the eye alone, seeing that from every house might be heard the music of falling waters, as the many streams from the lane-sides, mingling with the call of the Jackdaw and the melodious cascades of the nightingales, trickled down the hilly slopes among the innumerable trees.

(*a*) *i.e.* tingeing the grapes with a ruddy yellow.

And so it came about, that near to this little city of almost indescribable loveliness, Jesus arrived one day, six hours after the dawn; having tramped the long road in the company of some of his disciples. And at a place named Jacob's well, he sat him down to rest for a short time, while those disciples proceeded to this little city of Sychar, in order to procure some food. And it so happened, as he sat there, occupied with his own meditations, that a Samaritan woman came with rope and pitcher to draw water from the well, so that Jesus, being thirsty asked her: My friend! wilt thou not give me to drink, seeing I have come very far, and the sun is hot and the roads dusty, and my mouth is parched? Then that woman looked at Jesus and thought within herself: Surely this stranger, though he be so benign and noble of countenance is nevertheless a Jew, and great enmity there is between Jews and Samaritans, the one having no dealings whatever with the other by reason of many feuds. So that although she willingly complied with his request, she was constrained to ask: Sir! how is it that a Jew, as thou art, asks me, who am a Samaritan, to draw water and give thee a drink? Then Jesus, being struck by the candid and inquiring nature of her mind, gently laughed, and said: Nay, in that both Jews and Samaritans, and for that matter all nationalities and sects, are children of the one God, why should enmity and prejudice come between them, seeing consequently all men are brothers one to the other? Then that woman looked at Jesus with surprise and admiration, as she seated herself

sideways and so facing him on the wall of the well—while he on his part, instantly becoming interested and absorbed in the contemplation of her soul-nature, looked back at her with that deep but totally unattached affection which only a Master can feel.

And then with imperceptible dexterity drawing the conversation into channels which made it possible to discourse on Divine philosophies and so help her a little way on the path of enlightenment, he finally said with a gentle humour: And now, if thou hadst but known the bountifulness of God, who, all unconscious to thyself, sent thee here, to quench, so to say, thy own thirst, thou wouldst have asked *me* to give thee water instead, and I would have given thee living water—aye, the very essence of water itself. Then said that woman, dimly perceiving his meaning and venturing somewhat to excuse herself and draw him out further at the same time: Nay, how should I have asked, seeing the well is very deep and thou hadst neither pitcher nor rope; so that from whence couldst thou have drawn this living water of which thou dost speak? Art thou greater than Jacob, our forefather, who not only gave us this well, but drank from it himself, as also his children and his herds? Then said Jesus, with a smile of fatherly affection and gentle patience: And—yet he who drinks of this water will thirst again, but he who drinks of that water of which I speak will never thirst, for it shall be as an unquenchable fountain within himself jetting forth for eternity. Then said that woman with delight and enthusiasm: O Sir!

give me then of that water which ever quenches the thirst and which I need never draw from any well. But Jesus replied: First go and call thy husband, and then come back to me here. But said the woman: That cannot well be, for I have no husband (*a*). And Jesus answered, scrutinizing her kindly, and using his clairvoyant sight: Thou hast said well, seeing thou hast already had five husbands, and the man with whom at present thou art living is not thy husband. Then said that woman, astonished and blushing with momentary confusion: Sir, I perceive thou art not only a prophet, but also a seer, else how indeed couldst thou have known my past?

And then for a few moments she sat plunged in thought, for there was something on her mind she would fain ask, having sought for enlightenment elsewhere to no effect. Moreover here was a prophet so full of tolerance and understanding, that even knowing, as he did, that she lived with a man to whom she was not married—yet nevertheless was prepared to accept her as his pupil; so that she felt she could confide in him and ask him anything whatsoever. Nor was she wrong in her surmise, for he, on his part, held that true marriage was a matter of genuine love, and not of the formality of laws; and so for that reason he never rebuked her for her lack of conventions nor accordingly

(*a*) The Greek word means really "man" *i.e.* the man under whose authority this woman was living—in accordance with Eastern Customs. Jesus asked her to call her 'husband' because he wished her to obtain permission from him to receive instruction at his (Jesus') hands.

intimated to her that the prerequisite to spiritual knowledge was first to right herself in the eyes of men (68).

So at length she said: And now, most benign Sir, please enlighten me respecting something I would fain know? And Jesus replied kindly: Ask of me anything thou wouldst. And she said: Our forefathers worshipped in this mountain, but ye Jews say that it is in Jerusalem where men should worship instead? Then said Jesus slowly: Lady, believe me the hour approaches in the life of everyone, when he shall neither worship the Divine Father on this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, but within his own soul. Nay, ye worship One, the nature of whom ye do not know, but we who have learned that nature, know it in all its Blissfulness; seeing that Liberation is alone for those who are circumcised in heart. And so, as I said, the hour is approaching—nay, already is, when those who truly understand worship, shall commune with the Divine Father in their own spirit as absolute Being and Truth; for the Father seeketh such for his worshippers. Aye, God *is* Spirit, and above all, through all, and in all; and so those that would worship Him must do so as Spirit, and in Spirit; for He is the nearest of the near, the one Reality, the one Truth Absolute and Pure.

And then as he finished speaking she looked at him meditatively for a few moments, only dimly comprehending the deep mysticism of his words, and yet impressed by his gentle earnestness and wisdom more than by anything else. And finally she looked on the

ground, and began to draw, with the tip of her foot, circles in the sand, saying, as if to herself rather than to Jesus: Ah well—one thing I *do* know, and that is, the Messiah is coming; and when He has come, He will assuredly tell us all we desire to know. So then, because of the rich and mellow-hearted nature of that woman, and the spiritual possibilities he saw in her soul, and because he thought: 'After all, if she knew the truth, it would be a spiritual help to her perhaps beyond others, he made of her an exception; and with a smile and a look that was at once both tenderness and modesty and affection and confidentiality, he said, putting his hand for a moment on her arm: Then perhaps it would help thee to know that I am he.'

And just as he said this, suddenly the disciples appeared, laden with provisions from the town, and bearing upon their faces a look of surprise; seeing that Jesus not only conversed with a woman, but with a Samaritan as well. Yet not one of them took it upon himself to ask any question, but deemed it best to hold his peace. But that woman, on her part, being overcome and overjoyed and too deeply moved to hold any further converse in the presence of strangers, after giving one beseeching look at Jesus that he would not go away, immediately set off towards the town, leaving her rope and pitcher and waterpot behind; for it was in her heart to summon all her friends, and tell them what strange and wonderful happenings had come to pass.

But in the meanwhile, those disciples, full of solicitude begged their Master that he would eat of the food they had brought, deeming he must be hungry after so long and arduous a tramp. And so they stood over him, as he still sat on the side of the well, saying: Rabbi! we pray thee eat. But Jesus, having lost all sense of the requirements of the body, only smiled abstractedly as he answered: I have food to eat of which ye do not know (69). But because, on hearing this, the disciples whispered anxiously among themselves, wondering whether others had brought him food in the meantime, he added by way of assurance and explanation: My food is to follow the dictates of Him who sent me, that I may fully accomplish His work (2). Nay, ye who think much on the needs of the body, do ye not often say to yourselves: 'Ah, it wants four months to harvest-tide'? But reflecting on the needs of the soul instead, only look round and contemplate these fields of Samaria—which are already ripe for a spiritual harvest—aye, that maturity of the soul, when its sourness is fast becoming the sweetness of enlightenment and love. And so, aptly might I say: Already the reaper is receiving his wages and gathering in fruit for the Eternal Life, that both he and the sower may rejoice together. For herein ye may see the true meaning of the old adage, 'One soweth and another reapeth'; seeing I send you to reap a harvest not of your own labouring, in that ye are benefiting by the labours of others instead. And then he went on to explain to them why this

was so, in that many a seer had sown seeds of wisdom among the Samaritans, which by reason of their open-mindedness and beautiful humility of spirit had fallen on good ground.

But in the meantime, as already said, the woman had returned to the town to apprise her friends of the impressive fact that she had encountered a prophet, who had not only discoursed to her on the great science of God, but had even laid bare the very secrets of her life; so that those friends immediately came forth in her company to find Jesus himself. And because of the courteous and benevolent way he received them, and the compelling charm of his manner, and the deep wisdom of his words, they one and all begged him to stay with them in Sychar, offering him the honours due to a great Prophet and Seer. And as a result, he remained in that city of loveliness for two days; teaching to an admiring and understanding circle of people, so that when he had departed, they enthusiastically told that woman to whom they were indebted for all they had received at his hands: Truly, at first we thought thee over-credulous and too ready with thine adulation, but now having seen for ourselves, we are convinced; for assuredly this man is a veritable Saviour of the world.

2

So then, Jesus, having bade farewell to his new friends, journeyed on, together with his few disciples

to Galilee ; where he was eagerly welcomed by many of his compatriots, seeing that his fame was still increasing from day to day ; so much so, indeed, that oftentimes he was compelled to withdraw into solitude, in order to hide away from the throngs, that he might instruct his especial disciples in the more secret truths. For gradually he was preparing them for the mission of showing the Path of Attainment to their fellow men, and it was his intention they should lead the life of religious mendicants for a time, that among other things they might acquire that true humility (71) of spirit which is so great an aid to perfection in the Science of God (72). And because he knew this was not easy for them at their stage of the spiritual journey, often was he compelled to cheer them with many a golden maxim, showing how insignificant were poverty and slander and other sorrows, in comparison to the spiritual joys resulting from the Initiation, for which those very things were, so to speak, a preparatory trial. For know (he would say) that if ye could take the aggregate of all earths' joys and rid them by some miraculous means of their every reaction and every drawback, yet they would not compare one thousandeth part with the Bliss (73) of the highest spiritual Planes, symbolically called the Kingdom of Heaven. But to reach that state, your lives must be endowed with virtues far exceeding those of the Scribes and Pharisees, who are virtuous merely because of duty and the law, and not because of Love. And to that end ye must follow the golden precepts of true discipleship, uttered by all Initiates

(74) and far transcending the Laws laid down for the generality of mankind. For the true disciple shall not merely love his neighbour and hate his enemy, as the Law declares, but he shall love all beings—aye, *even* his enemies—blessing those who curse him, and seeking the welfare of those who persecute and revile him ; so that he may resemble the Divine Father, who causes His sun to rise on the wicked as well as the good, and bestows the blessing of his soft cool rain upon the erring as well as on the just. For, if ye merely love those who love you, what reward have ye earned (*a*), seeing even the taxgatherers and publicans do this ? And further, ye must learn also to discern between the fleeting and the eternal—for that is one of the very first rules of discipleship—so that ye store up no treasure for yourselves on the earth, where moth and rust destroy all things, and where thieves break through and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, in that where your treasure is, there also will be your heart. And learn, that as no man can serve two masters at once—for either he will dislike the one and give his heart to the other, or else attach himself to the one and neglect the other altogether—so ye cannot serve both God and the World. Therefore, do not be over-anxious respecting your daily lives, worrying over what ye will eat or drink, nor yet, respecting your bodies, worrying over what clothes ye shall

(*a*) Every disciple in Yoga has to earn—by practice and purification of character—the right to receive Initiation at the Master's hands.

wear ; for is not life itself more precious than food, and the body more vital than clothes? Nay, only behold the birds which fly in the air, seeing they neither sow nor reap nor garner, yet the Heavenly Father feeds them nevertheless. And learn also a lesson from the wild lilies, watching how they grow, in that they do not toil, as men, not yet spin as women ; nevertheless I tell you that even Solomon in all his resplendence was hardly arrayed like one of these. And so, if God thus clothes the grasses of the field, which thrive to-day yet to-morrow are used to feed the oven, will He not more surely clothe you, seeing that the Divine Father knows ye have need of all these things? And therefore I say, strive first for the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these other things will be given to you.

And so it was that in this manner he taught his disciples, amid the solitudes of the woods, and on the hill-sides, away from the surging multitudes. But at other times he came forth and visited town after town and village after village in the region of Galilee, instructing the people, after the manner of most teachers, with the aid of parable and simile, that those who had a glimmer of spiritual insight might more readily understand the deeper meaning of his words, while the others might only comprehend the superficial. But although Jesus went, as already said, from village to village, yet he always returned to Capernaum, where he made a home among his closest disciples, and where for the most part he preached to the people from a little boat

pushed out a short way from the lake-side—in which he would sit, while the crowd, varying in size, would stand on the shore listening to his words, and from time to time putting a question respecting his doctrines. Nay, so enthralled were they, that sometimes they refused to go back to their homes or occupations, so that he was compelled to set sail and put across to another part of the lake, in company of his especial disciples only. But from that listening crowd, often he would draw to him a follower or even a disciple of the more intimate kind; though one or two, momentarily impelled by his oratory to offer themselves as candidates for discipleship he was loth to accept, seeing he realised they possessed not the essential qualifications. And to those he would put some test, as all Masters do, attacking one or other points of weakness in their characters, in order to see whether they were truly ready to make that sacrifice which is a pre-requisite to initiation.

For on one occasion, just as Jesus was by reason of the increasing crowds about to set sail to another part of the lake, a Scribe came to him, offering to become his disciple and follow wherever he might lead. But Jesus, unwilling to accept him, answered evasively in symbolic language, saying that it was not a question of merely following, as a dog follows his master; for although the foxes had lairs and the birds their nests, yet the Spirit in man (75) being everywhere, had, so to speak, no special place to lay his head. Then another of his would-be followers coming forward, offered to attach himself

to Jesus, if only he might first be allowed to go and bury his father. But the Master smiled gravely, as he said: Follow me now, and leave the dead in spirit to bury their dead in body, seeing on you falls the better part of going forth far and wide to spread the truth of the Kingdom of God. And then again, another coming forward, said: Master, I will follow thee; yet may I not go first and bid farewell to my friends and relatives at home? But Jesus answered, again smiling gravely: No man who once puts his hand to the plough and then looks back, is fit for initiation into the mysteries of God.

And so—as already said—although Jesus preached much to the people; adapting so far as possible his teaching to the understanding of his listeners, yet he was prepared to accept only the few as disciples for the deeper mysteries; talking in parables to probe the understanding of the people at large, and so perhaps awaken in one or two the aspiration to learn and serve. And as especially showing this design on his part, he told them on one occasion the parable of a sower; for he said: The husbandman goes forth in the field to sow, and as he sows, some of the seed falls on the pathway and is trodden down by the passers by or eaten by the birds; and some falls upon the rock, and having no soil nor moisture, nor sustenance, sprouts up only to wither and die; and some falls among thorns, so that those thorns spring up and choke it; while the rest falls on good ground, growing up and yielding a hundredfold in return. And now, those who have ears to hear with, may they hear.

But afterwards, when they were alone with Jesus, the disciples proceeded to ask him the purport of this parable, for they had failed to understand it fully, though most of them came very near the truth. And Jesus answered : Learn that to you is granted to know the secrets (*a*) of the Kingdom of God, but to others I teach in parables, in order that they may see, and yet, as it were, not see, and may hear and yet not understand. And so now learn further the meaning of this parable ; for the seed is God's message, and that which fell by the pathway are those who have heard, but the evil ones, like the birds, come and steal it away from their hearts, lest they should devote their lives to that message and so come to Liberation. And that which fell on the rock, are they, who having heard, receive the message with joy, but in that they lack steadfastness of purpose (having as it were no roots in the ground) strive for a time, and then, when trials and tests and temptations come, fall away, striving no more. And that which fell among thorns, are again they who have heard ; but as they go along the ways of life, the message becomes choked by anxieties and wealth and pleasures, so that they bring nothing whatever to perfection. But finally, that which fell on fertile ground, are those, who having listened to the message with open minds and a right heart, patiently hold it fast, so that, by reason of its incomparable worth, it yields a hundredfold return. And now learn further

(*a*) Let those who dogmatically assert that Christianity possesses no esoteric side, ponder on this unequivocal passage in *St Luke.*

that nothing is hidden which shall not one day be revealed, nor anything secret which shall not ultimately come to light. And so, be careful how you listen; for whoever possesses anything (76), to him more shall be given, but whoever possesses nothing, even that which he thinks to possess shall be taken from him away (77).

3

Now it so happened that one of those occasions arose on which the crowd of listeners not only became too large, but utterly insatiable, refusing either to depart themselves or let Jesus return in peace to his home either. And so as he sat with his disciples in the boat, he said, not without amusement: There is nothing for it, but to make away to the other side, and thus elude these clamourers, seeing they give us no peace whatever. So now let us hoist the sail and begone as quickly as we can, for I see still more people coming to join the crowd. So accordingly they set sail, and although there were signs of a gathering storm, and the disciples were somewhat dubious as to the advisibility of embarking on a voyage at that particular moment, they were loth to disobey their Master, and therefore held their peace. And then as they pushed off, Jesus waved a farewell to the disappointed and murmuring crowd; after which he reclined himself, and laying his head on the leathern cushion of the steersman, to all outward appearance went to sleep, though in reality he abandoned for the time-being

his body; going into that kind of trance which is possible for Initiates of a high degree, and known as superconsciousness by reason of its depth and ecstasy and unutterable peace (*a*). But meanwhile the boat had progressed towards the middle of the lake; and the clouds had grown still more menacing, and the apprehension of the disciples greater at every moment; for the wild storms peculiar to that great hollow in the surface of the earth, were fraught with considerable danger to life, so that their fears were by no means without any cause. Then suddenly, precipitated from the snowy ranges of Lebanon and Hermon, down through the funnel-like ravines of the Perœan hills, cold and infuriated winds burst upon that inland sea, so that its usually so smiling and glass-like surface was agitated beyond all resemblance, and angry with great waves and dashing foam and breakers, which threatened to submerge or capsize the little boat and bury it and all its occupants in a grave of water, so that it never be heard of again. And, although with all possible speed, those hardy fishermen hurled down the sail and employed all their skill to avert disaster, yet they were beside themselves with fear; knowing that to swim in such a tempest was utterly impossible, so that if the boat were capsized, they must assuredly drown.

And, yet in the midst of this noise and vehemence and violent plunging of the boat, Jesus gave no

(*a*) If Jesus had merely been asleep in the ordinary sense of the word, it is self-evident that the violence of the storm would have caused him to wake at once. Obviously he was in what is called 'Samadhi' or trance; see Introduction.

sign of consciousness whatever, sleeping so to say, as calmly as if he lay on a moss-clothed bank in a sequestered wood, far from the noise and bustle of the world of men, and soothed to rest by the sighing of the breeze through the trees. For although his body was shaken and his face was splashed with spray, he continued to remain as one whose soul had abandoned its frame never to return; so that at last those disciples unable to contain themselves any longer, shook him exclaiming: Master, Master, wake—we drown. So then at last Jesus slowly roused himself; and with a gesture of command, he ordered those waves and those winds to be still, so that, lo! they subsided as suddenly as they arose, and there was a mighty calm (78). Then said Jesus to those disciples in a tone of reproach: Why these fears? Have ye not even yet, after all my teaching, acquired faith? (79) And having said this, and wiped the spray from his face, he sank back once more into his meditations.

But those disciples, although they had beheld many a manifestation of his supernormal powers, were filled with awe, never having seen the like of this particular control over the elements before: so that they conversed with one another in amazement, as they rehoisted the sail. And then, as in a little while, they neared the shore of the country of the Gerasenes, they looked around them at the scene, and saw that every cloud had melted away, revealing the clear nocturnal firmament (for the sun had now sunk

down behind the hills) from which the stars mirrored themselves in the waveless lake, causing it to look like a vast sheet of lapis-lazuli, by reason of the unfathomable blue and the innumerable little specks of silvery light, dotted all over its smooth surface. And in the distance, they saw the camphor-like sickle of the new moon, as it gradually appeared from behind the black silhouette of the far-away hills, like an emblem of unutterable calm.

So then having landed, Jesus, with his few disciples, sought a place of solitude where they might pass the night in the open ; for they loved to sleep under the clear sky, on the soft summer nights, and let the cool breezes fan them gently to slumber. And so having partaken of some food, which they had brought with them in the boat from Capernaum, they lay down on the grassy slope they had selected for their resting-place—a spot a little way from the village—and soon fell asleep ; for the disciples were weary after the excitement of the day. But in the morning as the sun rose, they arose also, fearing to leave their ship unwatched by the shore ; though as they came to themselves, they found Jesus already awake, and sitting meditatively looking forth on the lake, which spread its torquoise surface out a little way below them in the radiant morning sun, while the boat lay unmolested, gently rocking in rhythm with the music of the wavelets occasioned by reason of a breeze of dawn, soft-blowing from the hills. And as they lifted themselves up from the grass, the one waking the other, Jesus looked with affection on his three disciples (for only three

were with him at the time) and asked, playfully, how they found themselves after the experience of the previous day?—good-humouredly chiding them for their timidity—seeing, he explained, that no man can lose his life, but at most his body, which is after all more of a prison than anything else. Moreover, he continued: Think ye that ye could lose your bodies before your work is done—or I, mine for that matter—considering that nothing is a question of chance or fortuitous circumstance, but a question of the law of cause and effect; that great law which decrees that as a man sows so must he reap. And then he proceeded to remind them of the mission they had before them, at the same time pointing out that the Lords of Destiny were not so indiscriminating as to allow them to die before that mission was accomplished. But when he had made an end of good-humouredly chiding them, he arose and said: Come, let us now be going towards the village, for there is some work for me to do down yonder as ye will soon see. And then putting his arm in that of Peter, he proceeded to go down the slope towards the group of cottages a little way off, telling one of the other disciples to go and mind the boat.

Now in this neighbourhood were a number of rocky sepulchral caverns, and as Jesus and his two disciples came down from the slope on to a rough pathway leading to the village, a terrible spectacle burst forth upon them from out of these caverns in the form of a naked and homicidal maniac, who, having torn asunder the chains which bound

him, and which he dragged in his wake, was gashing his body with sharp stones, and uttering loud shrieks so that the blood of those disciples seemed to freeze in their very veins at the sound. For undoubtedly this pitiful spectacle of fury and madness and degradation was obsessed (80) by an entity of appalling malignity ; the more so, seeing that the moment it came into contact with the immaculate power and purity of Jesus' aura (81), it reached a veritable ecstasy of torment, resembling, if one so could say, the torture which a human embodiment of fire might feel if subjected to the influence of water. For, on beholding Jesus, that madman shrieked all the louder, and throwing himself on the ground, writhing and jabbering, made so loud an uproar, that a number of people came forth from the village with stout sticks and other implements of self defence, yet held back, fearing to come close, seeing this lunatic had been a source of terror to the villagers for many a long time ; and no one had dared to come by that way lest he should be set upon and killed. But when Jesus saw him writhing there at his feet, with an imperious gesture and a voice of command he said : Foul spirit, come out of this man and torment him no more (82) ! Then cried that spirit through the lips of that madman : What concern am I of thine, thou Son of God (83) ? Torture me not, I implore thee ! Then said Jesus, by way of calming him : Tell me, good man, what is thy name ? And thinking himself to be possessed by a veritable host of demons that madman answered : Legion is my

name. Then Jesus smiled compassionately, and began to soothe him by a process known to many initiates, and to talk with him calmly, until he began to show signs of becoming normal; though he lay panting with exhaustion, so that Jesus must needs bend down, and with the tenderness of a woman, take him and prop him up against a green bank by the side of the cave, patting his hands and encouraging him as best he could.

And it so happened that almost at that very place, some Greek shepherd boys had been feeding a herd of swine on the acorns of the scattered oaks, but on the appearance of that madman of whom they lived continually in terror, they had turned and fled, heedless of their herd and everything save their own safety and the instinct to get far away. But as a result, what with the shrieks of the madman himself, and the hurrying crowd, and the general noise and uproar altogether, those swine got utterly out of hand, and suddenly, becoming seized with panic, rushed wildly down the slope towards the little precipice over-hanging the lake, so that many fell over the edge and were drowned. But because of their superstitious nature, and the marvellous cure which had been effected, and the fact of the madman having said his name was 'Legion', those onlookers ignorantly averred the evil spirits had entered into the unfortunate swine (84) and so came to regard Jesus as a dangerous magician; too dangerous indeed to be encouraged to remain in their midst. And thus they sent for the elders of the village, telling them of all that

had happened, so that when those elders came and beheld the transformation he had wrought in that erstwhile so pitiable distortion of a man, they entreated him to leave their coasts, and return from whence he had come. So then, Jesus, not without a little inward amusement, acquiesced; but as he turned to depart, that madman that once had been, clung to him like a child, and cried in a transport of gratitude: Go not away and leave me, or at least let me go with thee. But Jesus, with an infinite kindness replied: That cannot very well be. And, as he gently disengaged himself, he added, persuasively: Go thou home to thy relatives and friends instead, and tell them of thy good fortune, and the favour of God who has restored thee and given thee peace.

4

So then, that same day, Jesus sailed back to Capernaum; and no sooner had he stepped ashore, than certain of his followers who had been on the look-out for his return, came forward, bringing with them a man named Jairus, a warden of the synagogue. And this man was in a great state of agitation and distress, for he possessed an only daughter who at that moment was on the very point of death, so that with almost tearful entreaty he begged Jesus to come and lay his hands on her that she might recover and live. And so accordingly that indefatigable and ever patient Master, after pacifying his supplicant, set out to walk in the

direction of his house, followed by disciples and other followers, as was now usually the case. And while they were on the way, it so happened that a woman who had for twelve years been afflicted with hæmorrhage, and had spent well-nigh everything she possessed on physicians (and all to no purpose), having heard tell of Jesus and his wonderful healing-powers, edged herself into the little crowd, and pressing close behind him, touched his robe; for she had said in her mind: 'If I can but touch even the fringe of his toga I shall be cured'. But Jesus, turning at that moment and seeing her, smiled with love upon her and said: Take courage, daughter, for thy faith has cured thee, therefore go in peace; whereupon Jesus proceeded on his his way. But ere he had reached the Warden's house, the little crowd was met by servants with downcast faces, who came and broke the news to Jairus that his daughter was already dead, and therefore it was useless to trouble the Master any further. But Jesus overhearing them, laid for a moment his hand on the Warden's shoulder, and said encouragingly: Do not fear, only have faith, and all will yet be well.

So then at length he came to the house, and allowing no one to accompany him save three disciples and the girl's parents, he went into the hall. But seeing that paid mourners in the shape of flute-players and others were already there, beating their breasts and causing an uproar, he first must needs banish them from the house; so that, assuming a tone of stern command, he

said: Begone! for why all this tumult, seeing the girl is not dead but only asleep? Then those mourners indulged in suppressed and scornful laughter among themselves, as they reluctantly slunk from the house, seeing they believed not a word he said. But Jesus, going to the couch on which the unconscious girl lay, merely took her by the hand, and said, with a voice of gentle command: My child, awake! And wonderful to say, immediately she returned to consciousness and looked with wide-open surprised eyes on those that were in the room. Then her parents, beside themselves with joy (85), scarcely knew how to stammer their thanks to Jesus, who stood patiently regarding them in the transport of their gratitude, as a father looks upon the ecstatic delight of two children to whom he has just granted a long yearned-for boon. For the mother, having first flung her arms round her daughter's neck and covered her with kisses, then came and repeatedly kissed Jesus' hand, while the father tried to find a flow of adequate words, which however were rendered incoherent by reason of a lump in his throat, so that Jesus at length deeming it well to put an end to these demonstrations, seeing it was necessary that the girl should be given some food, directed that some should be fetched accordingly. And then, having said a few cheering words to the girl herself, and patted her hand, and told her playfully not to get ill again, he took the parents aside, and solemnly requested them to keep the whole matter secret; for that was the only way he desired them to show him thanks.

But even as he made his way homewards, fate would have it that he was permitted no respite from his ministrations; for just outside the house where he lodged, two blind men were awaiting his arrival, having been told by some of his followers where he lived. And so as soon as he had gone indoors, their companion brought them to him that they might be cured. And they said to Jesus —doing him homage: O, Son of David, pray take pity upon us and give us back our sight! But Jesus, looking at them reflectively, asked: Do you believe I can really do this? And they answered with conviction: Master, indeed we do, seeing we have heard of all thou hast done for others. Then said Jesus, as he touched their eyes with a few passes of the hand: According to your faith let it be to you. And so they received their sight. And, like Jairus and his wife, they were overcome with a transport of gratitude and admiration and wonder; the which they poured forth in a torrent of words. But Jesus, gently but firmly, cut them short, and said: My friends, there is but one form of gratitude I desire, and that is secrecy; see that ye say nothing of this to any man—and now go in peace.

And yet, no sooner had they gone, than an admirer of Jesus entered the house, bringing with him a man who was deaf. And making a profound salutation, he said: This comrade of mine began to lose his hearing these many long years, and now he can hear nothing at all; but I told him of thee, O Master, and now I have brought him here, knowing thou wouldst take compassion and give him

back that which he has lost. And Jesus answered approvingly: Thou hast done a good action out of love for thy comrade, asking for nothing in return, and so I will grant thy request. And he looked at the man for a few moments with a concentrated gaze, as he stood there before Jesus, expectant and wondering. Then gradually a look of attention, and then surprise, and then delight, came into the face of that man, and he said: Strange, but meseems I begin to hear the noises in the street—and—why—I hear mine own voice—and blessed be Jehovah—this is a veritable miracle, for I can hear everything. Then Jesus laughed a little at his wonderment, and said humourously: Not so, for thou canst not hear *everything*, seeing thou canst not hear the language of the birds, nor the squeak of the flittermouse, nor the sighing of the wind yonder-side the hills of Lebanon; nor canst thou hear the voices of the spirit-entities surrounding us, nor the music of the spheres, nor the songs of the angels on the celestial planes, nor a myriad other things too subtle to be perceived by the senses, yet nevertheless perceptible to the 'senses' of the soul. And he turned to the disciple who had brought this man, and said: Humanity at large resembles in one sense thy friend, seeing it is deaf to the truth of the subtler things in nature and God. Then one day it hears just a minute fraction of a little bit of truth, and in its delight and surprise deems it has heard everything, and that there is no more whatever that it can hear, or that may be heard by any one, whoever he be. For Man bases his knowledge

on the five senses, little dreaming that a sixth or a seventh or an eighth sense may one day come into being, and so alter his whole conception of life, and hence of truth. And thus he resembles a fish in the sea who thinks to itself: 'Verily this sea is the whole world, and outside or beyond this there is nothing whatever':—for man lives, so to say, in the sea of his five senses, utterly oblivious to all else. And then he turned once more to the man who was deaf, and he said, as he bade him farewell: Fortunate is the man who hears with his ears, but infinitely more fortunate is he who hears with his soul.

V

I

Now at the time of this story, there was a sect of people in Palestine called Pharisees, who were the very embodiment of the essence of convention and legalism and dogmatism, with their inevitable concomitants, intolerance, censoriousness and pettiness of heart and mind. For in their zeal, for what they considered to be God and His commandments, they waged a truceless war against freedom and conscience and imagination, nay, against all the higher attributes of the nature of man and the very life of the soul itself. For to begin with, God they degraded to the level of a taskmaster and bargainer, and religion to the level of commercial obligations, and virtue to the utterly barren ceremonialism, while as to the Law, this they degraded to nothing short of a network of vexations and petty and utterly meaningless rules ; so that duty to God, duty to self, and duty to one's fellows, were all subordinated and at last absorbed in the most demoralizing of all duties—namely, duty to the *letter* of the Law (86). And so by reason of all this, these Pharisees were proud and self-righteous and exclusive and despotic and inquisitorial and

uncharitable, in that they violated—though, in their ignorance with the best intentions—the one law in which all other laws are summed up and held in solution; the law of brotherly love. For indeed, seeing that love is the very essence of expansion, what could be more utterly hostile to this most sublime and important of all laws, than a sustained effort made on the part of the human soul to achieve salvation by mechanical obedience; or, in other words to fetter its own freedom, to arrest its own growth, and to stifle its own life (87)? And yet so unimaginative, so ignorant and so barren of all sense of humour—which latter is often the wisest of teachers—were these Pharisees, that they remained as oblivious to the utter absurdity and fallacy and viciousness of their whole system, as an ostrich, who puts his head in the sand, and remains oblivious to the fact that his whole body may be seen nevertheless.

Now, as may readily be supposed, the teaching of Jesus seemed to this Sect so utterly reprehensible and shocking and pernicious and unprecedented, that they regarded it and its exponent as an enemy and an evil influence of the worst description (*a*); so that they took every opportunity to thwart him and to find him at fault and to lure him into controversy, always hoping to worst him in argument; though by reason of his intellect and marvellous readiness of wit, they were totally unable to

(*a*) This is the case with almost every progressive spiritual teacher or teachings. The present day holds no exception to those ancient days.

succeed. But this was not all, for they were drawn to him by that element or imp of the perverse in human nature which impels people towards that which shocks, and to a certain degree offends them, there being not a few, who were fain to admire him and his magnetic oratory in spite of themselves. And so it came about that they were often among his auditors, or attached themselves to his little circle, wherever they might chance to find it, either by the lake-side where he was wont to teach, or else in the fields, as he strolled with certain of his disciples and followers.

Now it so happened that, when Jesus had returned to Capernaum (after his little journey to the country of the Gerasenes), the Sabbath day came round on its weekly course; the day on which all work must be suspended and all shops closed. For prominent among the many religious observances of the Jews, including of course the Pharisees, was the keeping of this Sabbath; and accordingly no husbandman laboured in the fields nor in the vineyards, and no craft might be carried on, even in the homestead, nor fires lighted nor food cooked, seeing that such was the Law. Nevertheless, in spite of, or better said, because of these minute rules, innumerable discussions arose among the learned doctors, as to what might be considered work or what its cessation; for it was repeatedly and solemnly discussed whether a parent might carry his children in his arms, or whether it was lawful to eat an egg laid on this day (88), and many another problem of a similar nature; so that the whole matter resembled a

feather blown hither and thither by a great wind, and never coming to the ground, but disappearing nobody cares whither, seeing in reality the matter was of no importance at all. And so on this particular day, while yet the sun was low on the horizon and the air cool, Jesus and his disciples, together with some Pharisees they had encountered on the way, wandered through the wheat-fields; and as they strolled along, those disciples being hungry—for they had not breakfasted—occupied themselves by plucking some ears of corn, rubbing them with their hands in order to eat the grain! But when those Pharisees saw this, they were shocked at what they regarded as a profanation of the Sabbath, so that they said: Why are ye doing what is forbidden by the law? But Jesus turned to them with a reproachful smile, and said: Have ye never read so much as to know what David did when he and his followers were hungry; how he entered the House of God and took and ate the shew-bread, and gave some also to those followers—aye, the very loaves which none but the priests were allowed to eat? And have ye not further read in the Law, how on the Sabbath the priests in the Temple by reason of baking bread, break the Sabbath themselves, yet are utterly blameless. And then with his hand Jesus touched his heart, and said gravely: Know that in this place, within the fleshy tabernacle called the body, there is a Being greater than the temple, namely the Divine Spirit or Love; my disciples having abandoned all for the sake of its attainment: and so if ye only knew what the

saying means : ' I will have mercy and not sacrifice ', ye would not have condemned those who are without guilt. For learn, that when man has become unified with God or the Divine Love, he is Lord and ruler over all things—aye, even over the Sabbath day. So then when he had finished speaking, those Pharisees looked at him impotently, seeing his arguments were totally unanswerable and they could find nothing to say ; but nevertheless they were too impregnated with convention and tradition and narrowness of mind to be convinced ; thinking at the time, that, in some strange way, custom might be right and logic wrong ; and so they lingered a few paces behind to comment upon the matter among themselves.

But in the meanwhile, Jesus and his disciples began to hasten their paces, for it was their intention to go to the synagogue that morning, and the time for service was well nigh at hand. And then, as they arrived before the building, there sat on the steps a ragged beggar, evidently brought to mendicancy by reason of a paralysed arm, which rendered him incapable of work. And when those Pharisees perceived this man, they thought within themselves : ' Ha, here is our opportunity to get back on our opponent, seeing he has worsted us in argument in connection with the plucking of corn, having quoted to us the sacred writ in defence ; but now surely he cannot find a passage to justify healing on the Sabbath day, so this time we will be the conquerors. And accordingly they questioned him saying : Rabbi, tell us, is there

any authority for curing on the Sabbath? Then said Jesus, perceiving their intention and speaking with calm deliberation: Which of you is there, who if he possesses but a single sheep and it falls into a ditch on the Sabbath day, will not take hold of it and lift it out? And yet is man not far superior to a sheep; therefore, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath. So saying he turned to that beggar and with a tone of authority and gentleness combined, said: Stretch forth thine arm. And then—strange—that man stretched it out, and it was restored, and sound like the other. But those Pharisees were angry and non-plussed, so that as they left the synagogue that morning, they consulted together how they might accomplish the downfall of this man of such strange powers. But being aware of their perfidy, Jesus departed elsewhere, giving injunctions to his many followers neither to make known his doings nor yet to tell anyone whither he had gone.

2

Now, as already said, Jesus was preparing several of his especial disciples to go forth on a mission, and to this end he finally selected twelve and initiated them, by degrees, into the secrets of healing the sick and the demented, but more especially into raising the soul from the trammels of worldliness and bringing it forth to the Life of the Spirit. So then at length the time came, when these twelve disciples, having acquired these powers (89) were

ready to depart; so that Jesus gathered them together in a place of solitude, that he might give them a final word of instruction ere they set forth. And so he appointed them to meet him on a hill over-looking the blue lake of Galilee, but some distance away from Capernaum (90), where there was seclusion and quiet. And then, having seated himself on the soft carpet of grass, and begged them to be seated likewise, he looked upon them with affection and said: The time is now, when as religious mendicants ye shall go forth to preach to your fellows the way of Attainment, though only those will receive you whose hearts are ripe, for the others will only spurn you and cast you out. And so I send you forth, so to say, as sheep in the midst of wolves; therefore, prove yourselves as sagacious as serpents yet as harmless as doves. And be not surprised if men drag you before the Sanhedrim and flog you in the synagogues and try you before governors and kings for the sake of my teachings. Yet at such times, have no anxiety as to how you shall speak, seeing at that very moment it shall be given you what ye shall say (91); for it is not you who will speak, but the spirit of the Divine speaking in you. Nay, though it may sound strange in your ears, yet blessed are ye when the generality of men shall hate you and shun you and spurn your very names as evil things; for your reward is great in heaven. And so, be glad at such a time and dance for joy, seeing that very persecution is, as it were, the blissful penalty of greatness and Enlightenment and Emancipation

of the soul; for men have ever persecuted every true Prophet. Nay, on the contrary, sad it were if every man spoke well of you, seeing your forefathers spoke thus of the false prophets.

And Jesus paused for a moment; and then he continued, speaking with deliberation: And now, remember, ye are the light of the world, and seeing that a city built upon a hill cannot be hidden from sight (nor yet do men light a lamp to place it under a bushel, but rather on a pedestal instead, so that it may illumine the whole house) allow your light in such manner to shine before your fellow-men, that they may witness the virtue of your lives, and come on that account to seek for and know and love the Divine Father of Heaven. And to those fellow-men, ye must put forward the golden precepts I taught you before initiating you into the deeper mysteries; clothing them in short phrases which shall appeal to the understanding and be easily retained in the memory. And then to refresh their minds, Jesus began to repeat many of these maxims which in all schools of Divine philosophy are set forth for the disciple. And he said: Happy the lowly and unworldly of spirit, for to them belongs the Kingdom of Heaven. And happy those that mourn because of the transience and barrenness of earthly joys, for they shall be comforted by the joys of the Spirit. And happy the sweet of temper and the tender of heart, for in the words of the Psalm, 'They shall inherit the earth and delight themselves in the abundance of peace'. And happy those who hunger and thirst for virtue and Truth,

for they also shall be satisfied to the full. And happy those who make peace within their own and others' minds, for they shall be recognised as the children of God. And thrice happy the selfless in heart, for they truly shall know God in all his Blissfulness. . . . And so these golden precepts, and yet deeper ones, ye shall give to the worthy, but to the unworthy ye can give nothing at all; for just as it is not well to give that which is holy to dogs, nor cast, as it were, pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet—so is it with the pearls of wisdom and truth. And yet, whoever heeds these sayings, and acts accordingly, will be like a wise man who builds his house upon a rock, so that when the rains descend and the floods arise and the winds blow, it will not fall to the ground. But those, on the other hand, who pay no heed to these sayings, will be like foolish men who build their homes on sand, so that when the rains descend and the floods rise and the winds blow and beat on those houses, they will fall in a heap of ruins to the ground. . . And now go upon your ways without apprehension, thinking only to do good; and learn to fear not those who would kill the body, seeing they are totally unable to kill the soul. Nay, what folly is fear, and how great an illusion, if one but considers that even among the sparrows—two of which are sold for a farthing—not a single one may flutter to the ground without the Father's leave? And so be rid of fear; for if God takes care of the sparrow, will He not all the more take care of you? And then Jesus ceased

speaking, and embracing his disciples, sent them on their way ; but he, on his part, remained alone on the hill-side, and entered into his meditations.

3

So then, after Jesus had sent forth the twelve of the inner circle, he went not back to Capernaum —because of the opposition of the Pharisees— but retired for a while from the throngs of men, that in peace and seclusion he might instruct his many other disciples, as also obtain men for the spreading of his doctrines—for one disciple brought the other after the manner of all occult instruction. But after passing several weeks in this manner, he started on a round of the smaller towns and villages in the region of Galilee, finally coming into the vicinity of his own native place ; to which he went, for there was an aged man he desired to see in that little town, who had befriended him in his youth, and to whom Jesus desired to bring some comfort and cheer, in his declining years.

And so it came about, that the Master was in Nazareth over the Sabbath, and according to custom, he went to the synagogue and preached to his erstwhile fellow-citizens who had heard that a great prophet had appeared in Galilee named Jesus, (*a*), but had failed to credit him with being the self-same carpenter's son, educated in their own little town ; having said within themselves : ' Can any

(*a*) Jesus was a very common name in Palestine at the time.

good come out of Nazareth'. And yet, when Jesus stood before them, preaching with startling and magnetic and powerful and original eloquence, some of them said: Surely after all, this is the carpenter's son, whose brethren live in our very midst; and yet, can this man really be the prophet who has created such an uproar in Capernaum by reason of his miraculous powers; must there not after all be some mistake? And so, on the following day—for it was not permissible on the Sabbath—certain of the elders visited him at the house where he lodged—as also his brothers, who were devoured by curiosity—saying: We have heard of all thy mighty works elsewhere—O Rabbi—and now, wilt thou not favour us with a sign, that we also may pay thee homage, and behold thy powers for ourselves? For to this end, we have brought thee a blind man—a son of Abraham—that thou mayest heal him as thou hast healed others elsewhere. Then said Jesus dispassionately: No prophet is accepted in his own home, nor does a physician cure those who know him too well; for let me remind you, that although many widows of Israel existed in the time of Elisha, when the sky was rainless for three years and six months, and great famine existed throughout all the land, yet to none of them was Elisha sent, but only to a widow of Sarepta, a city of Sidon. And again, many lepers existed in Israel at the time of Eliseus the prophet, yet none of them were cleansed save Naaman the Syrian. For no prophet is permitted to make a show of his powers in order to gratify

his own vanity—which is exactly what ye would have me do—so that he may say within himself: 'Ha! these people doubted me, but I will soon get the better of their doubts and convince them I was right and they were wrong'. And so the very sign for which ye ask were no sign at all; seeing that nature is subservient even to the will of evil men who have acquired the essential knowledge, and hence no man needs to be a true prophet in order merely to heal the sick or even create a storm in the sky, or perform other things which appear to the ignorant as miracles, though they are nothing of the kind. For the true prophet is alone he who does the will of the Divine Father in Heaven, and is not tempted by the follies of self-seeking and vanity, and other attributes of the godless man; seeing that true prophets are to be discerned by their fruits, not in the shape of miraculous powers, but in the shape of love and lowliness and selflessness and spirituality, both in their teachings and in themselves. Moreover no true prophet will respond to the desires of those who ask not in the spirit of love and faith, in that by so-doing he would but bring harm to them instead of good, and relieve them of burdens of which they have not earned the right to be relieved as yet.

And then Jesus ceased speaking, and looked with calm and penetrating gaze upon his interrogators, who had nothing to say; for as always, his arguments were unanswerable and disconcerting and without a flaw. And so finally those elders went away non-plussed; and some of them were indignant

and some full of admiration, and some inclined to believe in Jesus, and others to regard him as an imposter. But as they went away, the one secretly rejoicing over the discomfiture of the other—for one in particular was so pompous as to awaken the dislike of his fellows—Jesus, all heedless, conversed with his host, not a little amused. But towards evening, as the sun began to set, he left the little town and descended the steep hill-slope, in the cool vesperal air. And as he went, the sun painted, with its dying red, the luxuriant plain of Esdraelon, and the purple heights of Carmel and the white sands that fringe the cerulean waters of the Mediterranean Sea; all of which stretched before his eyes; while nearer to, he could see the picturesque husbandmen busy in the field or vineyards, or returning from work up the white stone path.

And then, as he was nearing a certain village, he came across a homeless cat, that was lame and could hardly limp along, by reason of having been caught in a snare: so that, he bent down and stroked it, and then took it and carried it in his arms, till he came to the village in question, and to the house of one, Lorenza, a widow (92) for which he was bound, seeing she was a disciple. And to her he gave this cat, and said: Take care of it for my sake. Then one or two people who were present remarked with a certain amused admiration: Why, the Rabbi cares for all creatures—even an ugly homeless cat. And Jesus answered—yet not without a touch of humour: After all, these are your fellow creatures in the great Household of

God, and therefore brothers and sisters, having the same breath of Life as the Eternal. But the next day as he bade good-bye to his disciple, he said: And now be kind to my cat; for whosoever does a kindness to one of the least of these does it to me (*a*).

4

So then Jesus returned to the vicinity of the Lake of Galilee; to a secluded place in the hills, where his many disciples might come to him and receive instruction at his hands, and yet where the crowds might not follow. For Jesus, having already sent forth the twelve of the inner circle, was preparing others to go likewise and teach the Science of God; to this end instructing the more worthy how to use those occult powers for the healing of the sick and the insane. For often he would say to them in the words of a seer: The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few—pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest that he send forth more labourers into the harvest (*b*). And yet often would he also remind them that the speedy path to the Life of Liberation was, in contradistinction to the broad way which leads to destruction, and which is followed by the majority, a narrow one indeed; and only the few and far between, in the form of the daring and steadfast

(*a*) Jesus having reached God-Consciousness felt himself at one with all beings and hence used this mystical phrase to a disciple who would understand. (*b*) It was, I believe, Gamaliel who said this.

of purpose, could hope to find it, and to earn the right to receive the higher initiations at his hands. For he would add : Truly he who desires to be my disciple must ignore self and be ready to take up his cross and follow me to the end. But above all, he told them that continued practice was an absolute necessity to achievement, and without this, his teachings were utterly wasted in their hands. For, telling them a parable, he said : Know, that once a man who was about to travel into a far country, called together his bond-servants and delivered his property in their hands, that they should profit thereby. And to one he gave five talents, and to another two talents, and to another only one ; seeing that to each he gave according to his respective commercial ability—after which he departed and went on his way. So then, he who had received the five talents traded therewith, making five talents in addition, and he who received the two talents did in like manner, doubling the amount, but he who had only received one talent went and dug a hole, and buried his master's money out of harm's way. And after a while, the master returned from his journey, and having made his reckoning with those servants, he said to the first : ' Thou hast done well, and seeing thou has been trustworthy in the management of little, I will put thee in charge of greater things ; partake, therefore, of thy master's joy '. And to the second servant he said likewise, for he too had done well. But when the third came to him and said : ' Lord, I knew thee to be a man of severity ; reaping where

thou hast not sown and garnering where thou hast not winnowed, and so, being afraid, I went and hid thy talent in the earth; and behold here it is'. Then said that master wrathfully: 'Thou wretched and indolent servant, if thou did'st think I reap where I have not sown, and garner where I have not winnowed, then thou should'st have put my money with the exchangers that I might on my return have received interest'. And he turned to the others and said: 'Take this talent from him, and let him who has ten talents receive it'. And so it is with the path of discipleship; for to him who earns much, much will be given, but to him who earns nothing, nothing will be given; nay, he will even lose what he has already got.

And then, at other times Jesus would instruct his neophytes how to meditate, and in what manner to pray; telling them not only to enter into the most secret room of the house, but also to centre the mind in the most secret chamber of the heart, and then to pray to the All-Holy within. And thus it was he taught them to say: 'Our Father-Mother who art alone and within; Hallowed be Thy sacred name. In Wisdom, Love and Equity Thy Kingdom comes to all. Thy will be done, in Heaven so on earth. Give us day by day to partake of Thy holy Bread and the fruit of the Living vine. As Thou dost forgive us our transgressions so may we forgive others who transgress against us. Bestow upon us Thy goodness that to others we may bestow the same. And in the hour of temptation deliver us from evil. For Thine are the Kingdom and

Power and Glory; from the ages of ages, now, and to the ages of ages. Amun' (93). And then he would tell them the reason for this prayer, and of the Immanence of God; quoting to them passages from the great world-Scriptures which run: 'Raise the stone and there thou shalt find Me, cleave the wood and there am I.' For in the fire and in the water, even as in every living form, God is manifest as its Life and its substance. And again: quoting from a very ancient writ: 'Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden and in travail and I will give you rest' (94). And after that he would go on to explain the great law of Consequence and Sequence —putting it always in new language, so as to bring it to the comprehension of his pupils, and embodying it in short precepts easily retained by the memory. For the working of this Law of Consequence and Sequence is to be found throughout Nature, in that, for instance, the water arises in the form of vapour from the ocean, and falls as rain on to the mountains, descending as streamlets and rivers, and so reaching the ocean again from whence it came. And just as it is with this example from Nature, so it is with the actions and emotions of mankind; for he who projects love from himself will eventually receive love, and he who projects hatred from himself will eventually receive hatred, and he who does to others an injury will eventually receive an injury; seeing that everything revolves in a circle: for such is the Law of the Universe on the plane of the Relative: nay, so utterly invulnerable is this law, that it were almost easier

for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of it to fail. And so for this reason, Jesus taught his disciples: With what measure ye mete, with the same shall it be meted to you again; and as ye do to others so shall it be done to you; and as ye judge others so shall ye be judged; for the Law is just, and rewards, as it were, everyone according to his works. Therefore, be merciful, and so shall ye obtain mercy, forgive others and so shall ye be forgiven; nay, however often they may sin, always forgive them, because of the greatest of all Laws, the Law of Love.

And then he would impress on those disciples the absolute necessity of striving to follow out his instructions to the full, if they aspired to the higher initiations, saying: Though ye be gathered together in my heart, if ye will not follow my teachings I must send you away (95). For if ye fail to keep the laws of the lesser mysteries, how can I trust you with the greater? Seeing that only he who is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much, but he that is faithless in the least is likewise faithless in the much. But to those who made progress he always spoke words of encouragement and appreciation; for even the greatest of Teachers is full of gratitude to those who will but strive to learn. And then he would say, with his ineffably loving smile: Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear, and your hearts, for they understand. For know that many prophets and great men have desired to see those things which ye see, and yet have not seen them, and to hear

those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

And so in this way did Jesus teach his disciples, at the same time showing them how to still the modifications of the mind—that most difficult of all tasks—so that they might by degrees arrive at the perception of Pure Consciousness, or that Peace of God which is beyond all thought (96). And yet Jesus, although he never wearied of reiterating the absolute necessity of diligence and untiring application, was nevertheless no hard taskmaster, treating everyone of his disciples in the same way and making no allowances for individual temperament and character. For although to some he would adopt at times a tone of utmost severity, yet to others he was the very essence of patience and leniency, rebuking them by permitting a look of disappointment to cross his calm thoughtful face, rather than by using stern words. Nay, in comparison with many another master 'his yoke was easy and his burden light': moreover he accepted many to be his disciples who were notorious 'sinners' in the eyes of the unenlightened world, which could but judge by outward appearance and not by the heart. And for this reason it was, that gradually he came more and more to excite the suspicion and dislike of the outwardly virtuous and conventional, seeing they argued: This Rabbi is always in the company of the outcast and sinful, caring it would seem not at all for the respected and respectable people of the world. And to add fuel to the fire of his

delinquencies in this way, he shows an utter contempt of public opinion ; taking no steps whatever to hide his associations with these improper people, but eating and conversing with them before the eyes of all men,—as much as to say,—Take heed, ye mortals, and know I am in the right !

5

And so it came about that on emerging once more from his solitude, Jesus was constantly confronted by the evil machinations of the conventionalists in the form of Pharisees and Scribes and Sadducees, whose doctrines he constantly needs must refute and set at nought ; seeing they were the stumbling block to all emancipation and growth of the soul. For at every turn of the way, so to speak, they would come to him finding fault either with one thing or with another, transforming trifles into things of mighty import, so only to annoy, or exhibit their own righteousness. And on one occasion certain of these Scribes and Pharisees came to Jesus complaining they had seen one of his disciples sit down to eat without first washing his hands, after the custom of the Jews ; demanding at the same time to know the reason of so monstrous an omission. Then said Jesus : The man of cleanly habits washes his hands *when* they are dirty and *because* they are dirty, and the law prescribes washing before meat merely that ye may not defile your food by the dirt of your hands—just as it prescribes that men should clothe themselves,

both to cover the nakedness of the body, and that the minds of others may not be defiled by lustful thoughts. But who indeed could clothe himself who is already clothed, seeing *that* were the height of folly. And so if my disciples wash not always their hands before eating, it is because they have washed them already and they are clean. But know that even were this otherwise, yet it is not the unclean things entering into the body of man which defile that man, but the thoughts and words which pour forth from his heart in the form of evil purposes; aye, theft and murder and adultery and covetousness and deceit and envy and pride.

And then on another occasion, certain Pharisees who were boastful of their riches, reviled some of Jesus' disciples, because they were poor or cared not for wealth or fine garments: so that these Pharisees regarded them as tramps and vagabonds and nothing more. But Jesus hearing this, turned to them and said sternly: Look to yourselves, and beware of covetousness; seeing that a man's life consists not in the abundance of things he possesses, which are but fleeting and illusory, and so may all vanish in a moment of time. For know that once there was a rich man whose estate brought forth so plentifully that he thought within himself: 'What indeed shall I do, seeing I have no place big enough to store the great abundance of my goods'. And then at length he said: 'Ha! I will pull down my old barns and build vaster ones, and so I shall be out of my difficulty; having laid up such a store of worldly treasure that I may

take mine ease and eat and drink and be merry. But Jehovah hearing of this said to him: 'Thou fool, this very night thy life is required of thee, and now, to whom shall belong those things thou hast stored up'?

And so, time after time it came about, that Jesus was compelled to lay bare the pernicious and stifling doctrines of these totally unenlightened sectarians; but although at times when they sought to ensnare him, he treated them with the utmost severity, at others he adopted a tone which had in it something of an infinite pity, seeing he knew their deplorable hypocrisy was the inevitable result of their doctrines rather than of anything else. And on such occasions, he would say sadly: Alas for you Scribes and Pharisees and hypocrites! for ye close the Kingdom of Heaven against men, neither entering yourselves nor allowing others to enter who would. And alas for you, who devour the pittance of widows, and then to disguise your iniquity offer up long prayers; for the greater will be your penality. And alas for you, who journey over sea and land to make a proselyte, and having achieved your object, render him a greater child of perdition than yourselves. And alas for you—for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, but have omitted the weightier matters of the law, in the form of discernment and mercy and trust; being as it were utterly blind guides, straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. And alas for you, for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and plate, while within remains the filth of extortion

and excess. And alas for you, for, just like whitened selpulchres which indeed appear beautified from without but within are full of dead bones and putrefaction, ye appear outwardly righteous, but within are full of hypocrisy and deceits. And so, well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, seeing it is written : ' This people honoured me with their lips while their hearts are far away from me all the time ; and yet vain is their worship for their doctrines are nothing but the teachings of men '. And now that prophesy is fulfilled, in that ye reject the commandment of God, so only to keep your own foolish traditions. For—as touching this—did not Moses say : ' Honour thy father and mother, and he that speaks evil of either of these, let him surely die ? ' But ye say : ' If a man says to his father or mother, " That whereby thou might'st have profited, is given to God ", ye no longer allow that son to do anything for his father or mother ; making, by your tradition the Precept of God utterly void.

And one day there came to him a party of Sadducees—a sect who did not believe in immortality—and, seeking to refute his doctrines, their spokesman said : Rabbi !—as no doubt thou knowest,—Moses made a law that if a man's brother should die and leave a wife behind him, but no child, then that man should marry the widow and raise up a family for his brother who is dead. Now once there were seven brothers, the eldest of whom married a wife, but dying almost immediately, left no family, so that the second brother married

her in his place ; and he died also, leaving no family. And the third brother did likewise, as also the rest of those seven brothers ; all of whom married and died, leaving no family at all. And then after having seven husbands, that woman died herself. Now tell us, Rabbi, at the day of Resurrection, whose wife will she be ? Then said Jesus, with the suspicion of a smile : Thy story is ingenious, no doubt, but nevertheless thy question is based upon error, arising not only from ignorance of the true meaning of the Scriptures, but also of the Nature of God, and the Resurrection as well. For know that those who have arisen from among the dead in spirit to the Eternal Life, neither marry nor are given in marriage—being as the angels of Heaven ; knowing neither birth nor death any more. And yet seeing ye doubt that the dead awake to life, have ye never read in the book of Moses, how God said : 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'. So that He is not the God of the dead but the God of the living.

And then, having heard this discussion, and discerning that Jesus had answered well and forcibly and to the point, one of the Scribes came forward and also put him a question. And he said, saluting Jesus : Master, which is the chief of all the commandments ? And Jesus answered immediately : The Lord our God is One, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul and all thy mind and all thy strength—that is the first and foremost of the commandments. And the second is this : 'Thou shalt love thy

fellow-man as thyself '—for greater than these two commandments there are none. Then answered that Scribe: Rightly hast thou said, O Rabbi, that God is One and there is none but He, and to love Him with all one's heart and with all one's understanding and with all one's strength, and to love one's fellow as oneself is better than all our burnt offerings and oblations. And Jesus recognising he had answered discerningly, smiled upon him with approval and said: My brother! I see that thou thyself art not far from the Kingdom of God.

But, although this Scribe was an exception—the majority of his fellow sectarians were gradually weaving the web of their machinations around Jesus, that eventually they might accomplish his downfall; for their hatred and jealousy and fear of losing power was on the increase. And all the more because of his popularity with the people, which not only threatened to wax greater as time went on, but possessed the added annoyance of acting as a protection to Jesus himself, so that these designing Scribes and Pharisees were utterly thwarted, hardly knowing how to proceed, yet absolutely bent on achieving their object one way or the other.

So then, after waiting impatiently for an opportunity, they sent spies, who were to feign innocence and integrity, but all the time to endeavour to entrap him into some expression or pronouncement, on account of which they might hand him over to the ruling powers.. So accordingly, these

came to him, and put him a question, saying: Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest what is right, and making no distinction between one man and another, showest the way to God. Now tell us, is it right for us to pay tithes to Cæsar, or not? Then perceiving their duplicity, and regarding them searchingly, Jesus said: Show me a penny. And they did as he asked. Then he said: Whose likeness and inscription does it bear? And they answered: Cæsar's. Then said Jesus: Pay, therefore, to Cæsar that which is due to Cæsar, but to God that which is due to God. And then being able to find no fault with his answer, nor any flaw by which they could expose him before the people, those spies returned, having achieved nothing at all.

6

Now meanwhile John, that rugged Hermit of Engaddi, had left the vicinity of the Salim Springs, in order that he might come and preach to the people by the Lake of Galilee. But it so happened that Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Paraca, as also of Galilee, had his house in the city of Tiberias on the Galilean shores. And he was a dissipated, selfish and tyrannical ruler, given over to riotous living, and immoralities and vice. Moreover he had banished his wife from the precincts of his home, that he might marry Herodias, the wife of another, and a near of kin, and a woman immoral and unjust by nature, like himself. And so it came about that

John, totally fearless of the consequences, made allusion in his sermons to the iniquities of this alliance, as also to many another evil doing of this pair of culprits ; so that Herodias finally becoming enraged, prevailed upon her consort to arrest the Hermit, and cast him into a dungeon in the castle of Machaerus, that stood by the Dead Sea. And as a result, John's disciples were warned never to speak of his imprisonment, and by order of the court were further commanded not to preach in the public halls nor to make themselves conspicuous in any way (97). Nevertheless, John, from his prison, contrived to send two messengers to Jesus, in order to apprise him of what had taken place, and also to put to him a question. For that Hermit was depressed, and his spirit sorely tried, and he was troubled with doubts respecting the salvation of the people he loved, and for whom he had laboured so long ; so that in his extremity he wondered ' Was Jesus after all the great World-Teacher who had been predicted by the prophets, or was it somebody else, who had still to come ' ?

And so to Jesus those messengers put that question, as they arrived one day, when he was in the midst of teaching a number of his disciples. But Jesus, ever loth to avow anything in the form of especial distinction in connection with himself, answered in effect, that as to this, John must judge for himself by what he had seen and heard ; for no more definite answer would Jesus vouchsafe. And so those messengers went back the way they had

come. But some of his disciples expressed their astonishment to Jesus, that one so great and virtuous and enlightened as John the Baptist should come to deserve such a sorry fate, and end within prison walls. So that Jesus, by way of rebuking them for their lack of discernment, in not realising that even the great prophets may yet have a Karmic (*a*) debt to pay off, and so may not be judged by appearances—indulged in a little banter. And he said: When not long ago ye went out into the desert, what was it ye went to gaze at; was it a reed waving in the wind; or did ye think to see a man in gorgeous apparel, such as ye may behold in the palaces of kings; or did ye go out to see a Teacher? And then becoming grave, Jesus said: Yes, indeed a Teacher, and more than a Teacher, for of him it was written, 'Behold I send My messenger before thy face, who shall prepare the way for thee'. Nay, I tell you that, among those born of women, there is not one greater than John the Baptist, in his own way; although others who have never come forth before the eyes of men, may have reached to greater heights in the Science of God. For since the days of John to the present day, through that great Science, some have attained to the final goal by violence—as it were—setting aside all obstacles and taking, so to say, that Kingdom of Heaven by force (*b*); but before this time the people were

(*a*) There is no English word to express this Law of sequence and consequence. (*b*) *i.e.* those who chose to take one speedy road through the practice of Yoga instead of the slow road of Evolution which the majority take, may be said to be taking the Kingdom of Heaven by force.

guided alone by the Law, though the visions of the prophets spoke of greater things to come. And moreover, if ye are willing to receive my words, this very John the Baptist, of whom we speak, is one of those prophets returned, namely, Elijah the great. And yet although a few have accepted those greater things, yet to what can I compare the mass of this generation? Is it not like children sitting in the open fields and calling to their playmates; we have played the flute to you and ye have not danced, we sang dirges and ye did not pretend to mourn? For John came neither eating nor drinking, as other men, but practising austerities instead; and immediately they say he is obsessed. While this son of man (98) came eating and drinking, just like any other man, and they say, 'He is a glutton and an inebriate and a friend of publicans and harlots. . . .' And so this perverse generation will accept neither the one nor the other, finding fault which ever way it be, and so blinding itself to wisdom, however much the children of wisdom may testify to the truth. And yet even in evil there is something of good, and when all is said, I thank the Lord of the heavens and earth, that He has hid these mysteries from the cautious and worldly-wise, and unveiled them to those that are pure as babes, instead (99).

But in the meanwhile, John the Baptist sat confined in his dungeon, awaiting the answer of his messengers, and also awaiting his release, which was to come about in the shape of his death; But before that, Jesus, to whom prison walls

were no obstacles, came to him in his subtler body, bringing him an infinite comfort, which only those know, who have earned the greatest of all good fortunes; namely to stand in personal relationship with One who has attained (100).

Now it came about, that a royal banquet was held in honour of the birthday of Herod—and held moreover in that very castle where John was imprisoned east of the Dead Sea—so that there was a great concourse of guests and courtiers, and much feasting and riotousness, and altogether a great ado. And it must be known that Herod's wife possessed a daughter of exceeding fairness—Salome by name—for her body was lithe and graceful as the stem of a lily swayed by the soft evening zephyr, and her voice was mellow and conciliating as the cooing of doves in the trees, and her eyes were like pools of infinitely blue silence, and her ways as winning as the very essence of childhood, so that she was a delight to all her beholders. Moreover she could dance in such wise that even her own Gods ceased their work, and looked on at her from their places in Elsyium; totally forgetful for the moment of all else. And so it was, that when the banquet was over, and the guests were elated with wine, and Herod himself was half intoxicated and rendered maudlin and foolish and muddled-headed and lustful, Salome was prevailed upon to dance before them, which accordingly she did. And her slender body swayed and gyrated like a serpent, and her long ebony hair fell down in streams of silken loveliness, kissing

her bosom, as a weeping willow kisses the stream, and the bangles on her little ankles jingled in rythm to the movements of her feet; so that Herod grew totally beside himself with the admixture of the intoxication of her beauty and the fumes of the wine. And after the dance was over he clapped his hands in ecstasy, and said: Come to me, my adorable little maiden! and I will reward thee by giving thee anything whatever thy heart may desire.

So then Salome thought within herself: 'What shall I ask, for there are a multitude of things I would gladly have; so many indeed that the choice is difficult and I scarcely know how to decide'. But her mother, hearing what Herod had promised, called her daughter to her side, and said: Ask of him something that *I* want, and thou shalt have anything thou mayst desire, from *me* instead. And Salome replied: What then is thy wish? And Herodias said vehemently: I wish for the head of him who is confined in the dungeon within this castle; him who speaks ill of the great and mighty, and stirs up the hearts of the people against us; for until his head is severed from his foul body I will not live in peace. Then Salome looked crestfallen, and pouted, longing to remonstrate with her mother, yet fearing to do so, seeing she stood in awe of Herodias and was apprehensive as to what might happen if she refused her request. And so, slowly and ill-humouredly, she went back to Herod, and said, speaking with deliberation: I ask for the head of him who is called John the Baptist, and who lies confined in the dungeon underneath these halls.

Then Herod, becoming sobered all of an instant, looked at her in astonishment, and said: What! Dost thou ask for something that can profit thee nothing at all, and were an iniquity; seeing this John is a just man, and a saint and an ascetic, and I fear to take his life? And then he began to cajole her and persuade her and pet her, saying: Come, come, ask me for jewels or finery or gold or anything thou canst think of; but ask not this iniquity, which can profit thee nothing at all, but peradventure only bring evil on myself and thee. But Salome was obdurate, fearing to disobey her mother, so that once again she said slowly: I desire the head of John the Baptist, and nothing else. Then Herod grew angry and cried: A curse upon this perverse maiden who demands such morbid and unseemly and undesirable things; and yet, seeing I can not go back on my word, what else can I do but grant her request? But once more he began to use persuasions, thinking even yet to deter her, although all to no avail; for once more she repeated the self-same words.

Then Herod sent for his executioner and said sulkily: Go to the tower and tell the keeper thou dost come by my authority to execute the prisoner known as John. Whereupon that great black hulking executioner bowed low before Herod and went away. Then Herod went over to his wife and said: What is this; and how comes thy child by these morbid and unseemly inclinations, demanding nothing less than the head of a holy man? And Herodias answered shortly: She has but done

according to my wish. But Herod turned away in disgust, saying no more: for he feared to lose the favour of his wife, though he hated her for outwitting him; seeing she had often desired the death of John before, and he had always refused.

And then in a little while the executioner returned, bringing the head on a plate in a bath of blood, with its long matted locks and staring lifeless eyes; and then he gave it to Herod, who offered it in his turn to the girl. But she cried: Away with it, I will not touch it, it is horrid in my eyes. But her mother came forward, and taking the head by its hair, held it up in front of the guests, crying with vehemence: This is the fate of all those who dare to scorn or censure the actions of him who reigns; so saying, she gave it back to the executioner; while the drunken rabble gazed upon the gruesome sight, as he bore it away (101). So then the head was taken back to the tower, and, together with the body, was dropped into an oubliette, and never seen any more. But the news soon spread abroad that John the great Hermit of Engaddi was gone, and his disciples mourned for him, and fasted and sang dirges for the dead.

7

Now it came about, that Jesus after having been away for a long while from Capernaum, returned to that little city; although some of his disciples remonstrated, saying: Is it safe for the Master to return, seeing the power of the Pharisees and the

attempts they have already made to accomplish his downfall? But Jesus said, re-assuringly: My time is not come yet, and there is nothing to fear; since he who has attained, has the mastery over his own fate. And so, by reason of his long absence, and in order to give Jesus a welcome, Matthew, one of his especial disciples, gave a feast—for this Matthew was a rich man. And he gathered together a goodly number of Jesus' followers, including courtesans and those of evil repute. But the Pharisees, ever on the alert to find Jesus at fault, hearing of this, came by—for they were acquainted with Matthew: and then after the banquet was over, and Jesus and the others sat in the garden, overlooking the lake, came forward and engaged him in conversation. And certain disciples of John were also in the garden, wearing badges for the dead, so that when these Pharisees saw this, one of them then said to Jesus: Why do the disciples of John fast, while yours eat and drink as other men? And Jesus said with a calm voice: Ye are masters of the Law, and so ye ought to know—therefore, make known to these men your views on the subject, and tell us what are the benefits derived from fasts? But those Pharisees knowing not how to answer the question were mute. Then said Jesus: The vital force of men depends largely on what they eat and drink, but think you that the spirit-life is stronger when that vital force is weak, and that saintship is achieved by starving the body? For although a glutton is a sinner in the sight of God, by reason of his attachment to the things of

sense, and consequently his indifference to the things of the spirit, yet conversely, no man is a saint who deliberately renders himself a weakling, thus unfitting his body for the duties and labours of life by scorning to employ God's own means for acquiring strength (102) : for know that he who deliberately eats too much or yet too little, or in any way tortures the body, cannot know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. But as to John's disciples, they fast because of grief ; impelled by their devotion to show respect to the memory of the dead, seeing that to do otherwise were accounted by them a sin. And so they do well to fast ; for they have been taught that this is right, and are but following the behests of faith and the promptings of their own hearts. And yet, what is right for one man may not be right for all, and what is a sin for me to do, may not be a sin for you ; in that all is dependent on what particular stage of the great Road to the Kingdom of God we chance to stand. For know, there exists no utterly changeless law of Good and Evil, since both are relative and are not to be judged by external things. So one may fast with sincerity of heart and be blessed in the eyes of God, and another may fast, totally devoid of sincerity, and be accursed in the eyes of God instead (103) ; for motive it is that counts and not mere deeds. Moreover, as to my disciples, can ye make the bridal-party to mourn so long as the bridegroom is with them ; nay, first let the days come—and they *will* come—when the bridegroom has been taken away.

Now it so happened that Nicodemus, who formerly had come to Jesus in Jerusalem, was among the guests; and hearing this discourse he said: Rabboni, Jewish ordinances and their observance are not in accordance one with the other, for the priesthood assuredly needs reformation. And yet, couldst thou not contrive to blend in some way thy mighty work with that of the Pharisee and Scribes, so that the priests might aid in the spreading of thy divine teachings? But Jesus answered with a doubtful smile on his lips: No man puts new wine into old skins, lest the skin bursts and the wine is lost; nor does any man mend a worn-out garment with a piece of new cloth; seeing that the new patch would but wear away the older fabric and so a greater rent would be the result. And, therefore, to put a new phase of Truth into effete forms were not only the height of folly, but an impossibility in itself.

Then another of the Pharisees that was present said: Master, since thou hast just told us, thou dost bring a new phase of Truth into the world, and that our traditions are but as outworn garments, then give us a sign whereby we may know once and for all that thy teaching is of God, and may thus acquire faith. Then said Jesus, gravely: Ever and again am I asked for a sign, and yet there is but one true sign which ye cannot see; for it is only discernible by the eyes of the soul from which the veiling of worldliness has fallen away. But as to Faith, know that I did not come to buy faith as men buy fish or fruit or rubbish in the lanes (104);

seeing it is something which can neither be purchased nor sold for money; so that your request resembles that of a beggar who once followed me in the street after hearing me discourse to the throngs by the lake. For he said: 'Give me but a silver piece and I will believe everything the master has said; forgetting that hundreds of people might give him hundreds of silver pieces; so that the gift were as little a criterion of truth as the promise accompanying the request, seeing that promise was totally insincere, and based upon desire for the money and nothing more. And then, tempering his rebuke with a smile, Jesus continued: And ye, like that beggar, offer to exchange your faith for a sign on my part, though all the while your offer is prompted by curiosity and love of sensation, and not the desire to acquire faith at all. Moreover, ye seem to think that by confessing your faith in me and my teachings, ye grant me a favour, not realising for a moment that the teacher desires but to bring Peace and Enlightenment to the pupil, and is not profited one whit whether the pupil believes or no. And now, as I said, there is but one true sign, and that sign may be seen by all those who will purify the mirrors of their hearts, that the sight of the Kingdom of God may shine within them. Then asked one of those Pharisees: And when will it be that we shall behold this Kingdom of God? And Jesus answered: The Kingdom of God does not come in such a manner that ye may watch for its approach like a ship on the sea; saying lo! here it is, or lo! there it is; and yet nevertheless,

all they that walk the earth, and the birds of the skies, and even every creature that is under the soil, as also the fishes of the sea, and the very spirits in Hades draw us to that Kingdom. And, as I said, that Kingdom is *within*; and so whoever shall know his true Self shall find it, for if ye truly know your Selves, ye are the sons and daughters of the Omnipresent Father, and ye shall know yourselves to be in the City of God, aye, to be the City itself (105).

And when Jesus had finished speaking, those Pharisees looked at one another significantly, for they hardly understood a word. But Jesus, on his part arose—for the hour was late—and after bidding farewell to his host and the company present, went back to where he was lodged.

8

And when it was morning, Jesus repaired to the lake-side, in order to preach to the people, as formerly he had done; and many assembled together to hear him, being overjoyed at his return. And it so happened that when he had ended his discourse, a certain rich young man came forward, and said: O most perfect Master, what good work may I do in order to have eternal life? And Jesus looked at him gravely for a moment, and then he said: Why dost thou call me perfect, there is but one perfect, and He is God? But if thou wouldst know the eternal life, keep the commandments.

Then said that young man: And which are they? And Jesus answered: What does Moses teach? Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt honour father and mother, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Then said that young man: But all these things I have kept from the time of my boyhood, in what am I lacking still? Then said Jesus: If thou dost wish to attain perfection, go and sell the greater part of thy wealth and give to those who have nothing, and then come back to me and follow my teachings. But that rich young man made a wry face and began to scratch his head doubtfully; for the advice pleased him not at all. Then Jesus looked upon him kindly, and said with deliberation: Art thou so very sure thou hast fulfilled all those commandments, and hast thou truly loved thy neighbour as thyself; seeing that many of thy neighbours are clothed in rags and dying of hunger, yet thy house is full of treasures and money, none of which goes to any of them? But that young man answered nothing: and when he thought no one observed him, slowly edged his way through the crowd, desiring not to be seen.

And Jesus turned to his disciples with a suspicion of an amused smile, and said: How many there are who think they carry out the divine precepts, never realising they are hardly fulfilling them at all, seeing they do not even know what those precepts imply. And as to riches, and those that are burdened with possessions, how difficult it is for

these to enter the Kingdom of Heaven; aye, it is almost easier for the camel to go through the Gate of the Needle's Eye, than for a rich man to enter the Gate of the Path to God. Then asked some of the disciples: Who then can obtain Liberation? And Jesus answered: Those who as yet are steeped in worldliness cannot attain, but for those who are above worldliness and are of the spirit, all things are possible. Nay, everyone who forsakes riches and houses and worldly company for the sake of the Path to Heaven, shall receive a hundredfold in the Eternal Life; for many who now are the first shall be as the last, and many who are now the last shall be as the first. And now I will tell you a story;—for once there was a certain rich man, who clothed himself in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously off the richest viands and choicest wines every day. And a certain old beggar named Lazarus, who although he was lame and ill and covered with sores (yet nevertheless accepted his infirmities without complaining) was wont to sit by the gate of that rich man's house, so that he might share with the dogs of the street, whatever remains were thrown from the table. And then it came to pass that one day the beggar died, and his body was cast away, no-one cared whither, but his soul was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. And the rich man died also, but whereas his body was buried with great pomp and great wailing in a costly tomb, his soul only went to Hades, that in its purifying flames his desires might be burnt away. So then,

as he lay in his torments, he looked up and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus peacefully resting on his bosom. And he cried: Father Abraham, take pity on me, and send me Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and lay it on my tongue, for I am parched and tormented in this place. But Abraham answered: My son! that cannot be, for remember thou in thy life-time didst receive the good things of the earth, while Lazarus received but the bitter, and so now he is comforted and thou art tormented, seeing that these changes of life must be for the perfecting of souls (106). Moreover, between thee and us a great gulf is fixed, that those who would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that no one may cross over from thence to us until their time be due. Then said the rich man: 'If this be so, then I beg thee, Father, send him at least to the house of my birth, that he may warn my brothers lest they also come to this sorrowful place'. But Abraham answered: 'Thy brothers have Moses and the Prophets, let them give heed to their words'. But the rich man replied: 'Nay, Father Abraham! the Prophets are not enough, for only if one could go from the land of death to them, then would they believe.' Then said Abraham slowly: 'If they will not pay heed to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded even if one rose from the dead'.

And just as Jesus had finished speaking, a disciple approached him, and said: Master, thy mother and brothers have come over from Cana to see thee, and are standing on the edge of the

crowd. And Jesus, with a gesture of his hand, directed towards those around him, and a humorous smile on his lips, said : Behold here are my mother and brothers and sisters ; for all beings united in God, are not they my mothers and brothers and sisters ? But nevertheless he arose immediately and went to them through the crowd ; and after embracing them tenderly, took them away with him to the place where he lodged.

VI

I

Now many months had gone by since Jesus sent forth his Twelve especial Disciples on their mission, so that the time had come for their return, and he awaited them daily at Capernaum. And then at length one evening they arrived, all travel-stained and hot and weary, yet elated with joy and expectation and love ; for they could hardly contain themselves by reason of the inner delight they felt at beholding the Master again after so long an absence. So that as they entered the house where he was lodged, Peter and John, his most beloved disciples, threw themselves on his breast and repeatedly embraced him ; while the immeasurable love in his own heart, bathed them, as it were, with its radiance, bright as the very essence of the sun. And then, although Jesus had followed every detail almost of their many doings with the eyes of his all-encompassing consciousness (*a*), yet nevertheless they went through the recital of their adventures and successes and failures, until, utterly worn-out, they were driven homewards to their respective

(*a*) The Master is in perfect rapport with his pupils. Moreover he has only to direct his consciousness to any person or place in order to become cognisant of all things concerning it.

lodgements by a no-longer-to-be-thwarted desire for sleep. But in the morning Peter and John and James arose with the sun, coming to Jesus to receive his commands, previous to returning to their own more mundane affairs, which in the meantime they had placed in the hands of others.

And it so happened that as Jesus, a little later, was walking with them in the direction of the lake, they encountered a small crowd of people which had gathered together around a man who was being conducted by two servants through the streets; for he had been accused of stealing bread. And a woman, richly clothed, was following close behind, seeing that from her house it was he had stolen; so that the procession was now on its way to the court, that the man might be handed over to the Authorities. But when Jesus saw this, he confronted that woman and those servants, and said: What means this to-do, and why is this care-worn and sorrowful-looking man being conducted thus through the streets? Then the woman said indignantly: Sir, I caught this man myself in the very act of stealing bread from my house; for yesterday he came to beg from me, and I told my servants to drive him away as a vagabond and good-for-nothing; and now I know I was correct in my surmise, for he has turned out to be a thief, and I demand that he be dealt with according to the law. But Jesus said soothingly: Good dame, be not in haste to condemn this man, and to lead him away, for is not this a country of justice and right, and were it not well to first hear what he

has to say, before proceeding any further in the matter? And turning to the man, he said: If thou hast any defence to make, or tale to relate, then speak out, and have no fear. So then that man answered, with eyes full of tears, arising at once from emotion and weakness and gratitude, and said: O Sir, I have a wife and children who are starving because I am unable to get work, being feeble of body and ailing, so that no one wants to employ me, for through my infirmity I have lost all my previous situations, and no master will hire me again. And so I went to this lady and begged of her, knowing her to be wealthy, and thinking she could afford to give me of her substance; but she regarded me as a tramp and an imposter and sent me away. And then this morning when I saw my hungry children, and how they implored me to bring them bread, I said within myself, 'What can it matter what happens to me, so only they be fed and their lives be saved'. And so I went and stole the bread from this lady, because I knew a bit more or less would make no difference to her. But, O, Sir, I would not have taken it from the poor—and I cannot see I have done so very wrong. (107).

Then Jesus turned to that woman, and looked at her with so infinite a pity and reproach, that she blushed in her confusion. And he said: Lady, thou hast heard the story of this man, who is no doubt a culprit in the eyes of the undiscerning, but not so in the eyes of God; for those that would punish him were the true culprits, seeing firstly

they turned deaf ears to his appeal, and secondly they were ready to convict him without even hearing his defence, or troubling to learn the circumstances of the case; judging by appearances only and by nothing else. And yet such a proceeding is altogether reprehensible, being based not on true justice but on desire for revenge; and the more blameworthy, by reason of the fact that the mother of this theft was not an evil intention on the part of the man who stole, but niggardliness and hardness of heart on the part of those who refused his requests—whether for work or for bread. And all this being so, I say, let this man not only go free, but give to him that which he needs, thereby fulfilling the highest Law of all—the Law of Love; which embraces the command that ye do to others as ye would have that others should do to you. And now I appeal to you all, first to this lady and her servants, that she let this man go free, and to you who have gathered around, that ye see to the wants, both of him and his family by contributing of your substance; for know that even if you give the smallest mite in the name of Love, ye have done it unto the Father in Heaven.

So then, because of that appeal and because of the power and persuasiveness and eloquence on the part of Jesus, that rich woman felt ashamed; and after making a few excuses, went back with her servants the way she had come, while one of the disciples collected alms from the little crowd, giving bountifully himself; so that that man returned to his hovel rejoicing, and with a heart

overflowing with thanks. But when Jesus was once more alone with his disciples, he said: Did ye mark that poverty-stricken widow among the little crowd, and how she contributed two mites in answer to the appeal? I tell you, that poor widow contributed more than all the others; for they on their part gave what they could well afford, but she in her abject poverty gave all that she possessed.

2

And then in a few days Jesus left Capernaum, and journeyed afar into other lands; ever a wanderer, carrying the message of Peace to those who would receive it, and doing works of mercy wherever there was faith (108) without which, he himself owned, it were difficult to achieve much. And so it came about that he went as far north as Sidon, on the margin of the ever blue Mediterranean Sea, and then by way of Tyre he came eventually to Cæsarea Philippi—at the foot of Mount Hermon—where he saw the renowned grotto of Panium, thought to be the source of the Jordan. But he wandered not alone, for Time to a Master of so exalted a degree is unspeakably precious, so that not a moment might be lost; and for this reason it was that Jesus always journeyed with some of his many disciples, that he might teach them on the way. Moreover he wandered also for quietude and seclusion, seeing that in those places where he

had now become known and revered, he was ever disturbed; as this story has repeatedly shown.

And so, as that little band journeyed along, with a gentle gaiety and an inward happiness of heart, beholding the many and varied beauties that passed before their eyes, Jesus with an indefatigable flow of words, taught the incomparable Science of Peace to his equally indefatigable listeners; culling lessons and weaving illustrative parables from the incidents and sights they encountered on the road. And there was one thing he ever impressed on those disciples; and that was the absolute necessity of love and complete faith in their Teacher, and his teachings; not because Jesus, as man, desired that love as other men desire love—for he was infinitely above that—but because this complete faith in, and devotion to the Spiritual Preceptor is one of the greatest motive forces to attainment. Nay, the highest occult schools say, that the true disciple must look upon his Master as God, and love and worship Him accordingly—for truly that Master has become one with God, and His wisdom is infinite.

And yet, such a love must also prove itself through works—for as Jesus said repeatedly: It is not enough that ye say to me 'Master, Master'! and yet fail to carry out my teachings, either through lack of true faith or steadfastness of purpose. For hardly one of you comprehends the power and incomparable value of faith, which must be as a mustard seed; so great indeed, that if ye should command this black mulberry tree, under which we are sitting, to tear up its roots and plant itself in the sea, it

would instantly obey your command. And as great as your faith must be your love; so that ye must aim at that ineffable devotion which he alone possesses who has known Oneness with God, who is Love Himself; for without that true love, my inner teachings were a snare and a danger (109) to any who might acquire them; since Love is, as it were, the door to the sheep-fold of Truth. Nay, as once I said to the Pharisees in parable: 'He that enters *not* by the door into the fold, but climbs up some other way instead, is assuredly a thief; but he who enters by the door is the shepherd; and to him the porter opens, while the sheep hear his voice as he calls them by name and leads them out—and having led them out, he walks at the head of those sheep, and knowing his voice they follow him. But a stranger they will not follow; fleeing from him away instead, seeing they know not his voice. . . (110)'

And so to you, my disciples, I am the skilled (111) shepherd who feeds his flocks and gathers his lambs in his arms, carrying them in his bosom, and gently leading those that are with young. And I am also the door; and all who enter by me shall be safe, and shall go in and out and find rich pasture. But know, that other sheep I possess which are not of this fold, they also shall hear my voice; for the teachings belong not to one nation only, but to all nations, nay, in every race and every age God raised up witnesses to the Truth, that all might learn of the Divine Will and Purpose, and live in accordance with it, and so enter into the

Kingdom, to be guides and workers with the Eternal God. For in the beginning (so to say) (*a*), God willed and there came forth the Divine Love, symbolically called the Beloved Son, and the Divine Wisdom, called the Beloved Daughter, both of these proceeding from the one Eternal Fountain-head; and of these are the generations of the spirits of God; the Sons and Daughters of the Eternal. And these from time to time appear on earth, and dwell among men and teach them the way to God;—to love and obey the laws of the Eternal, that through these laws they may find salvation. For from God did men originally come, and the Great Way is the way back to God; issuing from the Eternal and returning to the Eternal by that great circular Road. And as I said, many nations have been shown that Road by those who came forth to reveal It to mankind; for that which has been taught in olden times is the Truth, though it has been distorted and corrupted by the foolish imaginations of men, and its sublime mysteries have been defiled and rendered nonsensical through ignorance. Nay, many false prophets have come—as they will come again—being as wolves in sheep's clothing, by reason of their seductive eloquence, purporting to be founded on Truth, yet having nothing of the Truth at all. For the teaching of these men—which ye may know by their fruits—is not prompted by Love of their fellows, but by vanity and greed and desire for adulation; so

(*a*) There is, and never was, such a thing as *nothing*: therefore, the term *beginning* is only a mode of speech.

that to suit their own ends, they distort the nature of God, making Him out to be mean and jealous and petty; so only they may pretend to invoke His anger on those who will not listen to their own foolish words. For know that he who leads others astray regarding the true nature of God, blasphemes against the Divine Essence, and the debts (112) incurred by that man will be indeed many; better almost were it for him to have a millstone bound round his neck and be cast into the sea, than that he should live to fill the innocent with fears (113) and miseries and sorrows, having no foundation for their existence at all. And so as ye teach in the world of men, warn them against false prophets, and make known to them the only true nature of God, and the absolute Oneness of God, though His attributes be many. For He is Love, Power and Wisdom, yet these three are One, and He is Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, yet these three are One; and He is Justice, Knowledge, and Purity, yet these three are One; and He is Splendour, Compassion and Holiness, yet these three also are One. And all these four Trinities are one in the Hidden Deity; the Perfect, the Infinite, the Only (114). For just as in every man there are three persons, that of the son, the husband and the father, and just as in every woman there are three persons, the daughter, the bride and the mother, and yet all three are one; so it is with God, being 'below' as it is 'above'. And this is the mystery of the Trinity.

And then one of the disciples said: As the other day in discussion I was trying to reveal the nature

of God one of my listeners replied, 'My friend! thou talkest much of God and His qualities, yet how are we to know if there be a God at all, seeing we cannot behold Him?' And, Master! to tell the truth, I found that question very difficult to answer. Then Jesus laughed gently and said: I will tell thee a parable; for know that once the fishes of a certain river conversed with one another saying, 'They tell us that our life and being is from water, how can we know this is the case'? And the discussion waxed hot among them. Then one or two that were a little wiser than the rest, said at last: 'There is but one way to discover the solution of the matter, and that is to consult a certain wise and learned fish who dwells far away in the ocean, and who is said to know all things; let us journey to him and ask him to show us water, that our problem may be solved'. And so accordingly a few of them set out, and after many days, they found that great fish, and put to him their question. And he answered: 'O ye foolish generations of fish that never reflect upon anything; and O ye few who are wiser than your fellows! seeing that at least ye seek to learn something of the truth! know that from water ye came and to water ye return, and in the water ye live and move and have your being; yet all the time ye know it not. And now, that is my answer, go back from whence ye came'. And in like manner shouldst thou have answered thy interrogators, seeing that similarily do all beings live in God; yet no man has actually seen God at any time.

And it so happened as they walked along one morning, that on turning a bend of the road, they came upon the putrefying carcase of a dog, lying in the ditch ; and so horrible was the sight, that some of the disciples turned away in horror and disgust, and would have made a detour so only to avoid it ; at the same time seeking to deter Jesus from passing it near by. For they said : Master ! go not near that loathsome thing which is utterly horrible to behold and stinks in our nostrils. But Jesus totally unmoved said : Not so, for its teeth gleam beautiful as pearls in the light of the sun. And he looked at them gently, amused at their disgust, as he said : Truly he who would acquire Peace must learn to behold good and beauty in all things, for that beauty must be in his own heart. And so learn that the true sage is neither disgusted nor shocked at anything he may behold ; being ever calm and tolerant and utterly at peace in his own mind, which has become one with the Divine Spirit. For just as the corn and the grapes are transmuted into the flesh of him who partakes of them, so must the natural mind be changed into the spiritual, then all loathings, enmities, and distresses will cease for evermore.

And at another time the little party was resting, after their long tramp in the sun, beneath the shade of some great cedar trees, but Jesus had withdrawn himself from the company that he might enter for a time into his meditations. And while he was away, his disciples began arguing among themselves as to who had attained to the highest degree

in the Science of the soul. And then as they were in the midst of their argumentations, Jesus returned, and for a few moments listened to them without saying a word. And it so happened that a group of children had come to that particular spot, so that with infantile curiosity they gazed at this party of strangers, with wide-open mouths, wondering who they might be. And one or two of the more confiding among them came to Jesus, as he stood there, looking calmly down at his recumbent disciples, and nestled up against his garment, as he, on his part, stroked their little heads. But one of the disciples, seeing this, wanted to chase them away, thinking they pestered his Master with their demonstrations, so that he said: Ye children, be off, run away and play among the trees; we cannot do with you here. But Jesus said: Not so, let them remain; they are doing no ill; moreover to do a kindness to these children and play with them awhile were more profitable than the discussion on which ye are engaged. And now learn a lesson from these little ones; for know that unless ye become as unprejudiced and teachable as a child, ye cannot attain to the Kingdom of the Divine. Nay, great men scorn not the little things of the earth; and so, ye, as my disciples, if ye honour such a child, ye honour me, and if ye scorn a child ye scorn me. For the wise man, who would enter the gateway of the Kingdom of God, must be humble as little children, never exalting himself above others; nay, assuredly he who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be

exalted. But this is not all; for he must humble himself to the extent of being the servant of humanity, in that truly the greatest among men is the servant of all; having the spirit of service nearest his heart. For such an one acquires all things that he may serve others; wisdom that he may give others wisdom, knowledge that he may pass that knowledge to others, happiness that he may teach others to be happy, and love that he may teach others to love. Yea, alas for him who seeks to acquire all these things for himself only, for his seeking will be utterly in vain. So saying, Jesus began to play with those children, and place them on his knee, and cajole and pet them, until the hour came for the little party to continue their journey, at the cool hour of sunset.

3

Now it chanced that on the next day, Jesus and those disciples came at length to the foot of a mountain of unusual and imposing splendour. So that Jesus said, as he gazed towards its heaven-kissing summit: What think ye; were it not well to ascend yonder height, which must surely command an entrancing view of the surrounding landscape, and so provide a veritable feast of loveliness for our eyes, nay, for our hearts as well.? Moreover, often does it happen that the rarity of the mountain air and the purity of the mental atmosphere act as a stimulus to the spiritual faculties, bringing about experiences of the soul in those who

have not attained as yet to the fulness of control, which otherwise might not be brought about at all. So saying, he looked at his disciples, waiting to see how his project was received, for some were not as strong and robust as others, and by reason of long journeying and its consequent fatigues he expected that several of them might elect to remain behind. Nevertheless, save for two or three, they received his proposal with enthusiasm saying: What precipitous heights would we not ascend, so only to reap those experiences of which thou dost speak, and above all to be with thee wherever thou mayest choose to lead?

So accordingly they began the ascent of that mountain, which proved a long and arduous climb; though with each step, so to say, they were rewarded with an ever more glorious prospect, as the hot sun, tempered by a cool fragrant mountain breeze, streamed down upon them from its cerulean sky. But although they climbed all day long with scarce a rest, it was well-nigh evening before they reached the summit; so that they saw the necessity of remaining there the night, for by reason of the darkness and the ruggedness of the track it was impossible to descend until the following day.

And so as they finally rested and watched the sun, like a great orb of crimson flame, sink down behind the lapis-lazuli sea in the distance, their souls were bathed in a super-earthly peace, which with some of them remained long after the sun had set and the pale quarter of the moon arose in a jewel-studded sky.

And when they had partaken of some food, and sat for awhile in contemplation of the entrancing scene, Jesus said with a loving smile : My brothers ! verily is this an auspicious place for meditation, and the union of the soul with the Divine Consciousness ; and so I will withdraw myself awhile from you all and go a little way off where I shall be undisturbed. But well were it if ye too would enter in your meditations, seeing as I said, ye might experience things here amid this imposing grandeur and purity of atmosphere, ye as yet could hardly experience elsewhere. So saying, Jesus strolled away, and seated himself beside a boulder silhouetted against the dark blue line of the sky.

So then those disciples began to still their thoughts and uplift themselves into the higher realms of consciousness, abandoning as it were for the time-being their bodies, until some of them forgot the earth-plane altogether, and soared in regions of unutterable Bliss. And lo ! they saw the Self of Jesus in all Its Majesty and Power and Love, so that He was transfigured into a resplendence altogether transcending the power of words. For His face shone as the very sun itself, and his apparel was of a dazzling white, while around Him, varihued opalescent angel figures floated, far transcending the diaphanous loveliness of the very substance of dreams. Moreover, those enraptured disciples beheld other forms of mighty Beings, which they knew to be the ethereal bodies of Prophets and Seers, no longer living on the planes of earth ; and among these was John the Baptist who had been. And

they heard the strains of supernal music resounding from instruments entirely unknown and unheard of on earth, while voices from the celestial choirs sang in unspeakable dulcitude songs of Eternal Love.

And then presently all this Resplendence faded slowly away, and those disciples slowly came back to their bodies; awaking like ones who had been asleep. But the memory of that ecstatic vision remained with them, which was beyond anything they had ever experienced before; for as the Master had foretold they had reached heights of consciousness they had been unable to reach hitherto.

And after rubbing their eyes a little, they looked towards where Jesus was seated, silhouetted against the sky. And as they did so he arose and came towards them with a smile. And he said with simplicity: Well, and did ye do as I said? And they answered with reverence: Lord and Master, we did. And some of them bowed themselves at his feet. But Jesus, immediately raising them and laughing, gently said: Did I not say ye might have an experience of the soul ye could not obtain elsewhere. And now was I correct? And they answered with one accord: Thou wast correct indeed. Then said Jesus: Nevertheless, relate to no-one what ye have seen; for the wise disciple keeps many things sealed within the recesses of his own heart. And now let us sleep until dawn once more allows us to rejoin our friends in the plains below.

4

But in the course of time, this circuitous journey came to an end, and Jesus, and those disciples that went with him, returned to the vicinity of the Lake of Galilee ; though as far as Jesus himself was concerned, not to remain for long ; since the time had come for him to go to Jerusalem in order to complete his great mission, which was now slowly drawing to its close. For in the meanwhile, the ever alert Scribes and Pharisees had not been idle, and had busied themselves with collecting all the rumours respecting Jesus and his teachings from every source they could lay hands on. And with a result absolutely satisfactory to themselves ; seeing they placed a totally false construction on his words, so that at last they said : Ha, now we must triumph, for this man has been uttering blasphemy, and teaching utterly blasphemous doctrines to the people, and now truly we shall be able to convict him and accomplish his death. For it happened that his followers, by reason,—not of any perfidy on their part, but rather by their enthusiasm and love and admiration,—had betrayed their master, disclosing without discrimination some of his most intimately mystical utterances to those in whose minds they were hardly comprehensible at all. And especially was this the case with those utterances concerning the unity of man with God, on which Jesus never tired of laying stress ; seeing the whole of his teaching was calculated eventually to bring this about. And yet, that others should

comprehend, he was compelled to relate his own experience respecting this; impressing upon his disciples that only he who had himself attained, was capable of leading others; since the blind could not lead the blind. And so times and again he spoke from the standpoint of the Christ-Consciousness, identifying himself with the Divine Essence, that others might eventually realize their own identification and be rendered free, not only by knowing the Truth, but by becoming the Truth through actual experience. And because of this sublime identification, he had sometimes referred to himself symbolically as the true vine, and the All-Father as the vine-dresser; saying to his listeners: As the branch cannot bear fruit unless it be joined to the vine, no more can ye bear fruit unless ye be joined to me; seeing that for you my teachings are the Path to Liberation.

But although the followers of Jesus understood these words in the spirit in which they were meant, yet when they leaked out into less enlightened channels, an utterly false element came to be engrafted upon them, so that they appeared as the proud utterances of a megalomaniac, rather than those of a great mystic. But this was not all; for the prolonged absence of Jesus from many of his followers having but fanned the flame of their love, not a few of them went abroad awakening the expectations and zeal of the populace against his return, so that his arrival might be a veritable triumph, and he might be welcomed as a King come back amongst his own. And so in this way did love and zeal, because

unwedded to discernment and discretion, bring about the catastrophe which was to rob those zealous ones of the very object of their love.

So then, knowing all this, Jesus was compelled to warn his disciples that the hour of departure was not very far hence, and that it would take the form even of a malefactor's execution, and one indeed of the very worst description. But at the same time he sought to comfort those disciples, assuring them that although to all appearance he would die, yet in reality he would only abandon his body for the space of a few days, and then return to it. But he added: After my crucifixion —for so it will be—I will retire from the world of men; though even then I will appear to you in my subtle body, that ye may not be left without a teacher, until the time comes when ye require one no more.

Nevertheless many of the followers—especially those who had not progressed far enough to receive the higher Initiations—were grieved to the core at the thought of losing the physical presence of their Master; especially as to these in particular, Jesus did not confide his intention of returning to his physical body, after his execution on the cross. And the more were they grieved, seeing that some of them felt their own indiscretion had aided in bringing this catastrophe about.

And yet, although the end was in sight, there was still much to be accomplished; so that on returning to Galilee, Jesus collected his chosen disciples from their respective habitations, and

after having given some final instructions to those he would not see again, set out from Capernaum for the last time, journeying by way of Samaria, where he rested at the houses of many of his followers, so coming at length to Jerusalem, which from now onwards was to be the scene of his labours.

And here Jesus returned to the house of his former friend Jude, where however he lodged for a few days only; later on taking up his abode with a little group of disciples, called respectively Lazarus and Martha and Mary; a family living in easy circumstances at Bethany near by to Jerusalem, from whence Jesus could easily walk over the Mount of Olives to the town itself. For this Bethany was a sequestered little hamlet lying among peaceful uplands, and garlanded by olive and almond trees, some few miles from the great city, yet hidden from it by the summit of Olivet. For it stood on the eastern slope of the Mount, being approached on the one side by a long ascent up a winding glen, which at length opened out, where a small spring nourished, with its cool pellucid waters, a clump of trees in the midst of a green sward. And it was on the very edge of this sward that the villa, as it might be termed, of this aforementioned family stood; being placed in a garden rich in shade and seclusion, and lying a little way apart from the other houses; so that Jesus not only found quietude, but a fitting place where to summon his disciples for the purposes of instruction; for he had made many converts in and around Jerusalem.

And so into the bosom of this little family, Jesus

arrived one day after his short sojourn in the capital; seeing the news having quickly spread that the Master was in the vicinity once again, Lazarus had immediately gone himself to the house of Jude, and begged Jesus to honour his own home in Bethany with his presence; conveying at the same time a similar request from Martha, his sister. For it must be known that Martha was the widow of one, Simon, who had died of leprosy; while Lazarus, on his part, was a man of much learning and sanctity, having been accepted by Jesus as a disciple fit for the higher esoteric instruction some time previously. Nevertheless, although Jesus had sat in their house and partaken of their hospitality before, and Lazarus on his part had journeyed to Capernaum to see his Master, yet the latter had never actually resided with this little family at Bethany; so that to enjoy the prolonged, if not uninterrupted, society of the being they loved more than anyone on the vast earth, was a delight they could hardly find words to express. Moreover when they prevailed upon Jesus to make their house his head-quarters, and receive his followers and disciples, there to instruct them in the seclusion of the garden-close, Martha's heart swelled with pride; for her brother had not failed to reveal to her that Jesus was the World-teacher long foretold by the prophets; although Jesus himself had never confided this fact to his hearing.

And so, previous to, and all the while during his residence with them, Martha could never show her devotion enough, which expressed itself in almost

incessant housewifely activity concerning his comfort, and the racking of her brains to provide him with delicacies and other things of a like nature; so that, overwhelming him almost with her attentions, she scarcely took time to profit by his discourse at all. But Mary, her sister, on the other hand, was of a totally different temperament, loving to sit at Jesus' feet, putting her hand in his, or resting her head against his knee, or looking up into his face, as he discoursed to those around. For Jesus, in that he radiated Love, never forbade the demonstrations of those who loved him in return; being unspeakably tender to the weaker sex, who were to him the embodiment of the sweetest essence of sisterhood, while he, on his part, was an elder and infinitely wise and loving brother, who fondled them and shielded them and advised them and sympathised with them and taught them, as nobody else in the world ever did or ever could. Moreover, he was the incarnation of a perfect guest, never giving an iota of trouble in the house, being pleased with everything, and asking for nothing, and exhaling over the entire household an unutterable peace, occasionally tempered with a gentle gaiety that immediately won the heart so completely, that all those with whom he abode said: Ah, if only the Master would stay here for ever, all our troubles and worries would vanish like shadows never to return.

And yet, as if in direct contradiction to this very thought, Martha on her part was at times overcome with so great a desire to give of the very

best and prepare the daintiest of meals for Jesus and those of the disciples who came to visit him in her house, that she not only fussed and bustled about, and dusted and tidied, coming to no rest at all, but resented that her sister did not follow her example. So that at last one day she said to Jesus, as Mary sat, as she so often did, at his feet: Master, is it not strange that my sister does not aid me in my household work, but is content to sit there and do nothing? Wilt thou not request her to bestir herself a little, seeing we are presently expecting other guests? But Jesus laughed gently and answered: Martha, Martha, my friend, thou art unnecessarily anxious and worried over a multitude of things; and yet, after all, only one thing is truly needful, and Mary has chosen that which can never be taken from her away (115).

5

But if Jesus spent many peaceful hours in the happy seclusion of Martha's house, a great part of the day—or at any rate of several days in the week—he discoursed to his followers, either in the public halls or in the temple-courts, or in the larger private houses, as the case might be. But, seeing all we have already said concerning the growing hostility towards him, many of those meetings were constantly interrupted, and one even ended in an attempt being made on Jesus' life. For the Pharisees, and others, were so enraged at certain

things he uttered, that had he not cast a glamour over them—so to speak—and disappeared from their midst (116) they would have stoned him then and there.

But of this we shall speak in its right place; seeing certain incidents led up to it by reason of which the Scribes and Pharisees were doubly incensed against Jesus, in that he worsted them and frustrated their designs, causing them to thirst all the more for revenge. For it so happened that as Jesus sat, in the midst of a circle of his followers, within the temple courts, those acrimonious Pharisees, by way of putting him for the thousandth time to the test, dragged before him a woman. And their spokesman said: Rabbi, know that this woman has been found in the very act of committing adultery (117). Now in the Law of Moses it is written that such women be stoned; but we would know what thou would'st ordain? But Jesus, taking no heed, looked on the ground, and began abstractedly to draw circles with a little twig he chanced to hold in his hand (118). For he knew full well that these Pharisees had only made a cruel half-statement of the law, which also condemned to death the man who shared the woman's sin; moreover, he regarded the condemners infinitely more reprehensible than the condemned. And so, seeing Jesus took no notice, remaining as unmoved as if the matter interested him not at all, that spokesman needs must repeat his question, not a little disconcerted by its cool reception. Then Jesus looked up for a moment and said coldly:

Let him who is utterly sinless among you be the first to cast a stone; whereupon again he stooped down and continued indifferently to make circles on the ground. So then those Pharisees, being utterly worsted and knowing not how to proceed, looked at Jesus for a moment in perplexity, and finding no suitable rejoinder, began to slink off without a word. And immediately Jesus got up, and with a slight inclination of his head, said: Lady (119), where are thy accusers; has no one convicted thee? And she answered with simplicity: Sir, no one. Then said Jesus, with a smile full of sympathy: And I do not convict thee either, go thy way; but in future be wise, and transgress the law no more.

But if those Pharisees went away utterly impotent to convict Jesus for the moment, they only busied themselves all the more in gathering evidence enough to accomplish his overthrow, when the time should be ripe. Nor did an incident connected with the healing of a certain blind man fail to add further fuel to the smouldering fire of their nefarious designs. For it so happened that as Jesus was making his way to the temple on the Sabbath, he, together with a few disciples, passed a man who was blind from birth; so that seeing him, those disciples put a question to Jesus concerning the law of sequence and consequence, and its connection with heredity. For they said: Master, dost thou see that man (who is well known in these parts) having been born blind? Now tell us, who was it that sinned, this man, or his parents, that he be so

afflicted? Then said Jesus, evincing no surprise at the question: Neither he—in his present body—nor his parents sinned, for he was born blind so that the workings of the laws of God should come to manifestation within him. For know that this man is re-born blind by reason of errors committed in a former birth, for which he is paying. And yet, as ye shall see, that debt is now over, for this man shall not only see the light of day, but the light of the Science of God. And then with a smile he added humourously: After all, we must do the works of Him who sent us while yet it is day, seeing the night soon comes when no one can work; nay, while I am still in the world, I must be a light in the world.

So saying, Jesus went up to that man, motioning his disciples to stand aside; and then having for a few minutes conversed with him, he finally made a salve of clay and spittle, and placing it upon his eyes, told him to go and wash in a certain Pool of Siloam, near by; which accordingly he did. But although he received, in a perfect ecstasy of astonishment, his sight, yet nevertheless he was for a while utterly bewildered, and knew not what to make of his new faculty at all; being like a little child unable to control its limbs; for totally incapable of measuring distance, he walked about, not as one blind only, but rather as one lame or paralysed as well, coming every moment to a halt. For every object struck him, as it were, in the face, even though it was far away; so that the people who saw his familiar figure, gaped in astonishment, wondering

what new evil had befallen him, until he enlightened them of his own accord.

But by reason of the little stir created, the Pharisees got to hear of the matter, and when it transpired that Jesus had healed him on the Sabbath day, they said: Aha, this seditious preacher; this culprit of a Sabbath-breaker, is again fortunately at work providing us with further material to accomplish his downfall; and this time we will surely be able to bring him to bay. But others argued on the other hand: Nay, how is it possible for a sinner to perform miracles? So that they immediately repaired to the man in question, in order to interrogate him, as also his parents, concerning the whole transaction, that there might be no mistake whatever, and they might obtain evidence first hand, and come to an agreement between themselves. So then, after obtaining the precise details from the man and his parents, they finally said: And now, young man, what is thy account of him who opened thine eyes? And he replied: He is a prophet. Then said those Pharisees, sanctimoniously: Nay, give God the credit and glory, for we know that that man is a sinner; seeing he healed thee on the sabbath. But the young man answered: Whether he be a sinner or not I cannot tell, but one thing I do know; that whereas once I was blind, now I can see. Then said they again, thinking he might contradict himself: How did he open thine eyes? And the young man answered with impatience: Have I not told you already, yet ye do not heed; so why do

ye want me to tell you again, do ye also intend to become his disciples? Then they answered indignantly: Impertinent fellow! *thou* art that man's disciple, but *we* are the disciples of Moses; we know that God spoke to Moses, but as to this fellow, we know not from whence he hails. Then that young man laughed and exclaimed tauntingly: Why, here is indeed a marvellous thing, that ye, being so wise and learned, know not from whence he is, notwithstanding the fact that he opened my eyes. All know well that God does not listen to the wicked, but if anyone is a God-fearing man, to him does He assuredly listen. And yet—although no one since the world began had ever heard tell of any man who opened the eyes of one born blind, ye say this prophet is a sinner; but surely if he were Godless he could do nothing at all? Then those Pharisees lost their tempers completely, and cried: Infidel! thou wast altogether begotten and born in iniquity, and dost thou dare to teach us? Know that from henceforth thou art ejected from our community, and an outcast in the sight of God. So saying those Pharisees went away.

But when Jesus heard of the matter, he sent for that young man, and said: Meseems, my friend! I brought thee a mixture of fortune and misfortune combined. And yet this must not be; and now I would give thee something better even than thy sight, if thou art ready to believe in my integrity; for the teacher is impotent to teach those who believe not in his capacity to teach. And so—now tell me

first—dost thou believe in the spirit (*a*) of God? And the young man answered: Show me that spirit that I may believe thereon. Then Jesus looked at him with an infinite tenderness and love, as he said: Thou hast seen Him already, for it is that spirit who speaks to thee now, as it were through me. And because of that radiance of expression and the absolutely compelling power of his words, that young man threw himself at the feet of Jesus in an ecstasy of trust and gratitude and love, as he said: O Sir, I believe in thee implicitly, teach me the truth. Then said Jesus, raising him: Know, that for the purpose of discerning between the real and the unreal I came forth into the world of men, that they who see not might see, and that others who think they see may become blind. And then he proceeded to initiate him in some of the lesser mysteries, telling him how he might tread the path towards attainment, and so ultimately come to know the God that is within.

6

But in the meanwhile, the Pharisees and other enemies of Jesus had decided to appear in a body on the next occasion when he should preach openly to the people, in order to accuse him then and there of the blasphemous utterances they deemed him to have made to his followers; the evidence of

(*a*) The word in *St John* is *son*, but its mystical significance derived from other passages is obviously *spirit*, so the word is used here to avoid misconceptions.

which they had now collected from all parts of the land. And in addition, they decided to engage the services of a number of ruffianly fellows, who should come armed with stones and sticks, and at an auspicious moment create an uproar, and if possible, incite the people to turn against Jesus and bring about his death, by stoning him in accordance with the law. So, one day, as he stood up, lovingly and eloquently and majestically preaching to a goodly concourse of his followers and others, concluding his discourse by saying: 'Verily if a man keep these my utterances he shall never see death,' those Pharisees rudely interrupted. And they shouted: We have listened to thy extravagant and insane pretensions long enough, and we have heard of the monstrous blasphemies with which thou hast gulled thy admirers and disciples, and we now hold thou art obsessed, and only fit to be put away as a danger to innocent and over-credulous folk. For Abraham, and also the prophets, are long since dead, and thou hast the audacity to say, 'If a man keep my sayings he shall never taste of death'. Art thou in thine own estimation greater then than our Father Abraham; and if so, pray whom dost thou make thyself out to be? But Jesus merely gazed at those interrupters with a look of utter fearlessness, not unmingled with pity; and then he said slowly: If I were to honour myself, my honour were as nought, for all truth, all action, all thought proceed from the Father whom ye call God, but not from me; seeing of myself I can do nothing. And yet if I should say I know not God,

I were a liar, leading men astray and away from the Father instead of to His feet; for I speak to the world those things only which I have heard as it were from above, or better said, from within; in that He who sent me has taught me, and is always with me, and one with me, as I am one with Him (120). Then those Pharisees, and the ruffians that were with them, began to create an uproar and to hiss and boo and shout: Hey! ye people, listen to this blasphemer who deserves death; come, let us stone him. And they flourished their sticks and took up stones to throw at him.

But it so happened that one, Joseph, a member of the Sanhedrim, and one much respected of the people, was among the assembly, for he was a follower of Jesus; so that he stood up and quelled the uproar saying: Ye men of Israel, do nothing foolhardy! lay down those stones, and let your reason be a better guide to you than your passions; for if this man should prove to be a great prophet, nay, even the Messiah himself, and ye should take his life, the wrath of God would rest upon you for evermore (121). Moreover, I appeal to you; has he the bearing and countenance of either a maniac or one who exalts himself above men? So although there still arose a murmur among the crowd, yet the stones for the time-being were thrown down, and the signs of violence were quelled.

Then said Jesus unmoved, but with a look of compassion in his eyes: My friends! have I not shown you many good works from the Father; and yet for which of those works do ye seek to stone

me? Then the Pharisees shouted: Not for a good work would we stone thee, but for blasphemy; seeing thou, as a mere man, hast over and over again pronounced thyself as equal to God. Then said Jesus calmly: Did I once say I was equal to God? Nay, I said I am one *with* God, which is not the same at all. Moreover is it not written in the Scriptures: 'Ye are all Gods': and so if God called those 'Gods' to whom the word of God was revealed, why do ye say of me, I blaspheme, because I said I was one with the All-Father? Nay, if ye have no faith in what I teach, then well were it if ye could have faith in what I do; that ye might perceive the Father in the works themselves, and so come to believe and know the God that is within.

Then shouted one of them: If thy works were truly of God, thou wouldst not heal on the Sabbath day, which we know full well thou hast done; and therefore thy works are a lie, and thou dost convict thyself, and art all the more guilty of blaspheming. And then another voice from among the crowd shouted: Aye, aye comrade! thou hast said well; come, let us stone him. And again there arose a perfect uproar; some of the people taking up stones once more, while others tried to frustrate them, so that the crowd began to fight amongst themselves. But Jesus whispered to one of the disciples who stood near: Gather my friends together, and meet me this evening in Bethany—so saying, he made himself invisible and withdrew. And just at that moment the officers came to put down the

hubbub and disperse the crowd, which had become like an army fighting without an object, utterly lawless and leaderless, and thus battling to no purpose at all.

But that night, when his disciples had come to him at Bethany, Jesus said: My work is not yet done, and so with the first rays of dawn we must set out; for I would go to the town of Jericho Bethabara, where are certain of my pupils. And then he added humorously: Moreover, I must escape for a while from these blood-thirsty bigots, who would tear me asunder and deprive me of my body before my time.

7

And so accordingly, Jesus and several of his disciples started with the dawn; after the Master had taken an affectionate farewell of Lazarus and Martha and Mary, who were very sorrowful to see him go; fearing, by reason of all that had occurred the previous day, a long separation. Nay, Mary on her part, wept an abundance of tears, laying the while her head on his shoulder and clinging to him as if she refused to let him go. So that Jesus needs must comfort her, saying with a wonderful dulcitude of compassion, as he stroked her head: Do not weep, beloved, for know I am with thee always, though thousands of miles may intervene (*a*).

(*a*) This is literally true; for to a Master who has attained cosmic consciousness, space is no obstacle, as already inferred in a previous note.

Whereupon, gently disengaging himself, he set forth, looking back to wave his hand once more ere he disappeared round a bend of the road leading into the glen.

And then with his disciples, he journeyed on all day long, descending first the valley of the Watering-place of the Herds (so called, by reason of a well which happened to be the only spring between Bethany and the Jordan valley) and then presently they passed through the Valley of Camels, and then, later, over a ridge into the Valley of the Sidr tree, and further on, the Valley of Pomegranates; finally reaching an elevated place, where they rested, for it commanded a view of the vast plain of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. And Jesus said, indicating with a gesture the lovely prospect stretching before them, and as if quoting the words of the Deity: Where there is aught of Beauty or Splendour or Magnificence, know that to be of Me, for I am the Good, the Beautiful and the True, and he who adores even a minute portion of any of these, adores a portion of Me.

And then in a little while, they descended into that veritable Paradise of a plain; and having passed the Pool of Moses, finally reached the City of Jericho, or the City of Palms, as it was called; which lay by the springs, at the foot of a mountain named Quarantana. And it was a beautiful city, surrounded by a large and lovely oasis of corn and hemp fields, which gleamed in the sunlight and rippled in the breeze. Moreover, the town itself was rendered beautiful by reason of its profu ion

of balsam gardens and countless palm-trees, as also its gorgeous palaces, which Herod had built, in order to serve him as a winter residence. And so to this place, Jesus and his few companions came in the late afternoon; but although they themselves had friends with whom to lodge, they were uncertain as to which of those friends they should take Jesus; so that they asked: Master, shall we go in advance and find out who can take us in, and how much room there will be in the houses of those we know? But Jesus said: Worry not yourselves needlessly, for there is one with whom I shall lodge for the night, as presently ye shall see.

Now it so happened, that as pilgrims from Peræa and Galilee used to assemble in Jericho on their way to Jerusalem, the place was thronged with many people, so that no sooner had Jesus entered the town, than he was recognised by his compatriots. And as a result, the news soon spread abroad that the great Galilean Prophet was amongst the assembly, finally coming to the ears of one Zacchæus, who was the chief among the tax-collectors and a man of wealth. But as fate would have it, this man was of very small stature; and although on hearing the news, he longed to see what manner of man this great prophet might be, he was totally at a loss how to satisfy his curiosity, in that the crowd hemmed him in on every side, and were as high walls over which he could not see at all; for he resembled a child lost among a company of adults. Then suddenly as he heard those around him cry: Look, look he is coming this way; an

idea shot like a dart into his mind; and he said to himself: Ha, I will climb into yonder sycamore tree, and from among its branches I will surely see him as he passes by. So accordingly he made all haste to edge his way through the interstices, as it were, of the throng, and succeeded in climbing up into that tree in the very nick of time; hiding himself amongst its leaves like a school-boy out of school. But as Jesus passed by, he looked up, and then seeing that dwarf of a man, he said humourously: Zacchæus, my friend, make haste and come down from thy leafy perch up there, for I would lodge with thee the night, if thou wilt have me, seeing I have nowhere to go; being, so to say, a houseless wanderer on the earth. So then the heart of Zacchæus bounded with delight and surprise and pride; for he thought to himself: Here am I regarded as a sinner, and hence scorned by the people, and yet this great man actually honours me by offering to be my guest. So that he scrambled down as best he could with all possible speed, thinking little of his dignity and only of his delight. And then, having bowed low before Jesus, he said: Master, thou dost honour me indeed, and right gladly will I receive thee into my house and give thee of the very best of my substance; nay, how can I thank thee for deigning to abide with such an one as myself? And so now let me lead the way, for my house is close by at the other end of this very street.

But when the citizens of Jericho saw what had occurred, they murmured among themselves, saying:

Very strange is this; how comes it that so great a prophet should actually ask to be the guest of an iniquitous tax-gatherer; surely this is quite unprecedented and we know not what to make of it at all? But in the meanwhile, Zacchæus, overcome with what he considered to be his own unworthiness, began to excuse himself in Jesus' eyes, as they walked towards the house. For he said: Master! I am but a tax-gatherer I know, and I feel unworthy to act as host to so great a seer and so holy a man as thyself. And yet, think not that all tax-gatherers are necessarily evil, for I try to do what is right in spite of my vocation; seeing I give half my wealth to the poor, and if I have ever unjustly exacted money from any man, I repay him fourfold the amount. And so I tell thee this, that thou mayest not think too badly of me. And Jesus smiled on him with great affection, and said: Kind-hearted man, far from thinking badly of thee, know that God is aware of thy good life and thy faith; for He judges by the heart, which in thy case is full of good will and humility, and not by actions as do those, who lacking in charity and discernment, are but full of their own conceits. And so thou dost resemble one of two men who went up to the Temple to pray; the first being a Pharisee and the second a tax-gatherer like to thyself. For the Pharisee, standing erect, prayed in his self-righteousness: 'O God, I thank Thee I am not like other men, being neither a thief, nor a cheat, nor an adulterer nor yet as yonder tax-gatherer; seeing I fast twice a week and pay

the tithe on all my gains'. But that tax-gatherer, on the other hand, would not even lift his eyes to the heavens, but beat his breast and said: 'O God! be propitiated by one who is a sinner'. And now I tell thee, friend, this man went home more absolved than did the other; for everyone that uplifts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be uplifted. So saying, Jesus gave that man his blessing, as he entered the house, where he remained during his sojourn in Jericho. And he taught him many things concerning the Science of the Divine; taking him in his company wherever he preached or performed works of healing, both to body and soul.

And so it happened one day, as he sat by the Temple, where he had been discoursing, that a little funeral procession passed by, so that one of his company asked him: Master, when a man dies, is it certain he will live again? And Jesus answered with a smile: Know the words that come from the Divine Father: 'I am the Resurrection and the Life; if a man centre his whole mind and heart on me, he shall not die, but live eternally. As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. Nay, blessed are the dead that die in me and are made perfect in my image and likeness, for they rest from the sorrows of the recurring cycle of death and birth, in the bosom of the Eternal Bliss'. And then a woman who was amongst them asked him: How long shall death hold sway? And Jesus answered: When two shall be one, that which is without as that which is within, and the

male with the female, neither male nor female any more—then shall death no longer hold sway. But to that end, man must be free of all desires which bind him to earth by reason of their fulfilment; and to be free of those desires, he must suffer the Spirit of God to fill his whole heart. And around him, as it were, on all sides and within him, and above him, he must hear the words eternally: 'I am thou and thou art I, and where thou art, there am I also, and in all things am I sown. And from wheresoever thou gatherest Me, in gathering Me, thou gatherest thyself (122)'.

And just as he said this, the sound of wailing and the singing of a dirge floated to them from a little way off; so that Jesus smiled as it were to himself, as one smiles indulgently at the folly of the ignorant, yet knows that to try to enlighten them were utterly in vain. And then to those around him he said: Lacking in wisdom are those who mourn for the dead, seeing the soul can never die, and therefore to lament is to be guilty of selfishness and even more foolish than to lament when a child is born. For to die is but to be born into a fairer and vaster world, leaving the narrow confines of the body, as the child leaves the narrow confines of its mother's womb. And yet, although the pious profess to believe this, nevertheless they continue to weep and to wail, making their actions totally inconsistent with their beliefs. And so it will ever be, until man obtains knowledge in place of mere belief, and the faith born of that knowledge in place of the faith born of ignorance, which has no value at all.

8

And on the following day, Jesus bade farewell to his host, and set out with his disciples to Bethabara. And yet scarcely had he been there many days, when a messenger arrived from Bethany; having sought Jesus in Jericho and learned from thence his whereabouts. And he said: Sir! know that thy disciple and friend, Lazarus, is sick nigh to death, having fallen into a swoon from which he awakes not at all, so that his sisters urge thee and implore thee to come at once; for the physicians are puzzled and utterly powerless to cure his complaint. Then said Jesus, after a moment's hesitation: Go thou and tell his sisters to fear nothing, for this illness will not end in death; but tell them nevertheless I will come in a few days, and that in the meantime I send them my blessing. So then that messenger departed with all haste the way he had come. But Jesus turning to his disciples said: We remain here but two days longer, for then I return to Bethany, seeing Lazarus has entered into a trance, having abandoned for the time being his body, to realise as it were the more glorious planes of God. And yet, nevertheless, I must waken him, else there is danger that he return to his body no more. Then Peter, who was with Jesus at the time, said imploringly: Master, Master, go not back to Judea, for the Jews will certainly stone thee if ever thou dost go there again; and so I beg of thee not to risk thy life. But Jesus said severely: Peter, seek not to deter

me, for the time is now drawing near when, as I said, my work in the world of men is over and it is decreed that the Jews should take me. Moreover, have I not already told thee that my mission here must end on the cross, therefore play not the tempter to me, for thy temptations fall on unheeding ears and only rebound on and injure thine own self. And then Peter looked crestfallen and very sorrowful, but he held his peace. But the other disciples spoke in the same strain, and said: Master! if Lazarus is entranced, surely he will wake again; moreover, he is well as he is, being in a state of bliss, therefore why go and arouse him at the expense of thine own life? Then said Jesus: Learn, ye of meagre faith, that no man can take my life, as ye wrongly call it, since ye mean my body, until I surrender that body of mine own will; but as I said, the time draws near when I myself will abandon for a while that body. Then said his disciples: In that case, we too will offer up our bodies with thee. But Jesus only smiled and said nothing more.

And so accordingly in two days time, when Jesus had completed his instructions to certain neophytes in that place, he and his little company set out once more towards Judea; for although the Master knew full well he was going to his execution, yet that very execution he deemed necessary to his Cause, and the final climax to his mission in the world.

Now it so happened, that even as that messenger had spoken with Jesus in Bethabara, all signs of

life had forsaken the body of Lazarus, so that the physicians pronounced him dead; and his body had been placed in the tomb, while friends had gathered around both Martha and Mary, to offer them their condolences and mingle, so to say, their tears. But when the time for the approach of Jesus was due, Martha went out to await him at a place where she knew he must pass on the way; though Mary remained in the seclusion of the house, undesirous of meeting him in the open, where any wayfarer might chance to be; for her emotion was very great, and she knew she must give way.

So then, as soon as Martha saw Jesus coming, from the place (where she sat on a low wall under the shade of an ilex) she rose and went slowly forward to meet him, saying, as he came to her side, and with tears in her voice: Master, Master, if only thou hadst been here, my brother would never have died: for know, that not only is he dead, but he has already been buried. But Jesus, after having motioned to his disciples to stay behind, put his arm about her, and leading her homewards, said, with infinite tenderness and encouragement: Martha, my child, be not distressed, for thy brother shall be revived again. But Martha, misunderstanding his words, said, as if they brought her but small consolation: Oh, I know no doubt he will be revived again when all the dead rise, but not now and here, to be rejoined with us who love him and mourn his loss (123). But Jesus said: Know that thy brother only sleeps and he shall wake again. Hast thou not learned to trust thy Teacher enough to know

this can assuredly come to pass? And Martha answered doubtfully: Yes, Master, I believe thou art come to manifest the Christ of God; and yet—But Jesus, interrupting her, said: Come, let us hasten to the house where thy sister is, and do thou call her to come to me in the garden, for I would speak with her alone.

So then, having done accordingly, Mary came out into the garden, beautiful in her sorrow, and threw herself on Jesus' breast, torn, as it were, between the pathos of death and her joy at beholding the beloved Master again. And she said brokenly, between her sobs: Think not I grieve for my brother, seeing I know it is well with him; and besides, what is our loss in comparison with his gain? But the sight of suffering, as my sister and others suffer, fills my eyes with tears that refuse to cease to flow, do what I will. And presently Jesus very gently lifted her head from his breast, and took her chin in his hand, compelling her to look into his face, so that she tried to smile through her tears. And then for one brief moment he showed her a portion (*a*) as it were, of the ineffable wonder of his true self; and tears, which were as the nectar born of the very essence of an ecstasy of compassion and infinite Love came into his own eyes. And as he gazed at her, he said, with a tenderness far surpassing that of any lover: My Child, because of thy selfless and deep and spotless love, thou

(*a*) *i.e.* because the entire glory of the real Self of an Adept let alone a world Teacher, cannot be made manifest through his physical body.

art very near the supreme Goal. And then as a result of that look, and the supernal dulcitude of those words, Mary felt as if her whole soul had become bathed in a radiance so blinding, and yet at the same time so unutterably calm, that never in her whole life could its glory fade from her heart. But Jesus putting his arm about her, said : Come, go, bring thy sister, and then lead me to where ye have laid him.

So then in a little while, Jesus and Mary and Martha and one or two others, came to the tomb ; which was a sepulchre hewn out of the rock, with a stone which served as a door. And Jesus said to one of his disciples—for they had come towards the house and waited for him near by : Do thou take away that stone. But Martha protested, apprehensively saying : Surely, Master, thou wouldst not open the sepulchre, seeing our brother has been dead four days and by now the body will have begun to decay. But Jesus answered slowly : Hast thou then forgotten what I said to thee ? Did I not tell thee thy brother should be revived ? So then, the stone having been moved aside, he straightway went into the tomb. And with a voice of command, he said : Lazarus, awake ! And behold ! that sleeper slowly awoke, and his soul came back to his body, to see, with eyes, still too dazed to be astonished, Jesus, standing smiling by his side. But the others had turned away, fearing what they might have to behold.

Then said Jesus in a tone of affectionate rebuke : Friend, how is this ? For meseems thou hast not

carried out my instructions to the letter, and if I had not returned to awaken thee, who knows what might have happened? Look where thou art! Then suddenly growing solemn, he said: Thy sisters held thee for dead, and so thou hast caused much affliction and unnecessary apprehension. But now make haste and arouse thyself, and come with me out of this tomb, for they await thee in terrible suspense. And he began to loosen the winding-sheet which was around the still dazed and astonished Lazarus, and to lead him forth from the cold sepulchre into the sunlight.

Then Martha almost swooned with amazement and joy and relief and gratitude, hardly finding words to express herself, and not knowing what to make of it at all, while Mary on her part embraced her brother with tenderness, saying likewise hardly a word; for she too, found her heart too full to speak. Moreover, there were a number of people collected together round the sepulchre, who loved Lazarus, and had mourned over him; so that in consequence, there arose a perfect babel of tongues, causing an uproar by reason of their utterly uncontrollable amazement; from which Mary would gladly have escaped, that she might try to express the love and gratitude towards Jesus, which seemed almost to burst her heart. But in the meanwhile, Lazarus to whom four days had passed, seeming but as a moment, longed to withdraw from the shower of questions and demonstrations which poured upon him from every side; so that at length he said to Jesus aside: Master, for pity's sake, bid these

people depart, that I may return in peace to my house and divest myself of this lugubrious garment, which fits ill with my good health and happiness at seeing thy return. So then Jesus said to the assembly (many of whom bowed down and worshipped him, deeming him to be indeed the Messiah because of this totally unprecedented occurrence) : My friends, be not deluded and worship not *me*, but rather give thanks to God who has suffered so grievous an error to be dispelled, and Lazarus to come to no evil end ; for know that the thread of life was not cut, and only a little knowledge was needed to bring him back from his sleep. And yet, although as ye see, he is well and whole, nevertheless it behoves us all to let him return in quiet to his house, that he may eat and refresh the body after so long a fast. So then, after this appeal, Lazarus was allowed to go in peace with his sisters and Jesus. But as to those astonished onlookers, they noised abroad, in spite of what Jesus had said, that he had raised a dead man from the tomb.

VII

I

And so it was, that the reviving of Lazarus, because of the stir it made, came to be, as it were, the all but final instrument in the hands of that destiny, which was to bring about Jesus' execution. For not only was that event the means of apprising the Scribes and Pharisees and other enemies of Jesus, that he was once more in the vicinity, but the miracle (since so it appeared in their eyes) filled them with an element of superstitious fear in addition to all else. And so they conferred together, saying: There is no time to be lost, and now, if we do not bring about the death of this terrible wonder-worker within a very short time, something totally disastrous will befall ourselves and our nation, by reason of the fact that all men will look upon him and worship him as a divine King; and who knows that through the Romans, he may not take the throne, and then we shall be utterly undone. Moreover—and this is not the least factor in the case—he is a magician of the most powerful order, and by the law of Moses we are entitled, nay, commanded, to put all such to death. But now the point is, will he again disappear and go forth into foreign parts, or will he remain

here in Jerusalem for the great Feast—for on this hangs the success of our enterprise?

And after this manner they spoke among themselves, coming finally to the conclusion that if only one of his followers could but be induced to turn traitor, and deliver Jesus into their hands for some pecuniary recompense, by discovering his whereabouts, it might be possible to apprehend him, should he fail to attend the feast. Nay, they regarded this method as the only reliable one; for to arrest him in front of the populace was inevitably to create a terrible disturbance—though they decided to stir up as many people against him as they could, in case there was anything in the nature of a public trial, and his admirers should turn out to be in the majority. And so they laboured, elaborating their schemes, little dreaming that all the time, Jesus, to suit his own exalted purpose had returned to Jerusalem, in order expressly to give himself into their hands; for a work of a higher order called him from the turmoil of men. Moreover, with the forethought of a Master, who selects means that may serve many ends, he elected to give himself up at the time of the Feast, knowing that many of his followers from all parts of the country would come to Jerusalem, among which would be his mother, and Mary of Magdala, whom he desired to see again, that he might comfort them and enlighten them as to the reason of his execution.

But in the meanwhile, he sat with Lazarus and Martha and Mary, and one or two other disciples, in their house at Bethany; breaking to them the

news that he must abandon his body for a time, and suffer an ignominious death in the eyes of the world—though he promised them, as he had promised others—it would be no real death, and that he would show himself to them again, first, in his present body, and then in his subtler vehicle of consciousness,—which no spear could pierce, nor yet the machinations of man ever destroy. For as he had often told them, he who attained to a certain altitude in the Science of Unity with God, had the power to lay down his life, so to say, and take it up again at will. But although this was to be the case, after his execution (he told them further) he intended to withdraw from the world of men, so that in future he would only appear to his own disciples in that subtler body already mentioned. And although they were deeply troubled and sorrowful, yet Lazarus and Mary, as also the other closer disciples, had received the initiation by reason of which they could function on the higher planes; and seeing that Jesus had over and over again appeared to them in that subtler body when his grosser physical vehicle was far away in another place, they knew that withdrawal meant no separation, so long as *he* promised to reveal himself to their psychic eyes.

And then when he had finished telling them the reason for his execution, and so comforting them, he said: And now to-night, my mother and my disciple, Mary of Magdala, will be here; for I have apprised them where they may find me, so that any moment they may arrive; for the pilgrims

as ye know, are already on the way. And Martha said: Then, I will go and prepare a supper for our guests; though it will be a sad supper after all thou hast told us—for only to-day dost thou give us back our brother, and now thou thyself wouldst leave us, and—Oh! I shudder to say it—die a horrible death. Then said Jesus smiling: Death is no sorrow to him who leaves his body at will; so be not troubled on my account, for I shed my body as but a heavy garment, which hampers and subdues, as it were, the blissful activities of the Real Man.

So then in a little while, Mary of Magdala and Jesus' mother arrived at the house, as he had predicted—and although Martha received the latter with many protestations of affection, towards Mary of Magdala there was in her manner a suspicion of coldness, arising from that frailty to be found in the heart of many a woman, which appears in the form of a little envy and a little pettiness and a little disdain. So that Jesus, when the opportunity offered, whispered to her with a kindly reproach in his eyes: Martha, by this all men will know ye are my disciples, namely if ye possess love one for the other. And Martha understood, and felt rebuked, and sorry, and ready to try in future to remedy the fault. And then while supper was being prepared, Jesus took Mary of Magdala into the garden, and after instructing her in many things concerning the Way of Attainment, he broke to her the news of his approaching execution. Moreover, he told her exactly what would occur in almost

every detail, predicting how he would be crucified, and then taken down from the cross and laid in a tomb by his disciple, Joseph of Arimathea, from which on the third day he would emerge in secrecy. And he added : Thou and Mary the sister of Lazarus will dress my wounds, and I will remain in Joseph's house for a very little while and then return to Galilee to a sequestered place whither my closer disciples will have preceded me. But finally I shall disappear from the world of men ; for to linger among them were but to incur their hatred, and evoke in them the desire once more to put me to death. And although they could do me no harm, yet by the law of cause and effect, they would bring a terrible retribution on themselves ; which indeed I would spare them, because of Love.

But although Jesus thus gave to Mary the comforting assurance he would not die, she was deeply troubled nevertheless ; so that when supper was ready and she sat at table, she could eat nothing at all, for she realised this was, so to say, a farewell feast. And so all the time her mind became thronged with memories of other, but joyous, meals, partaken of in the company of Jesus by the blue lake of Galilee, just a little while, as it seemed, ago. And then she remembered the first time she had seen him at the house of that rich Pharisee, and how she had bathed his feet with tears and ointment, and so won by that action his incomparable affection and interest in her soul. And because of that, whenever she had been rejoined to him after a lengthy separation, she had brought

with her that little casket of perfumes, that she might mingle, as it were, the oil of her devotion with that other oil, and then pour them both over his feet. And so, sorrowful, and appetiteless, and disinclined for conversation, once more she took that little alabaster casket from the folds of her garment, and pouring a little of the refreshing spikenard on Jesus' hair, she gently stroked his head and temples with her hands, after which she anointed in like manner his feet.

But there was amongst the company, one, Judas Iscariot, a man who acted as treasurer to the little band of disciples (124). And seeing this action on the part of Mary of Magdala, he said protestingly: Why this waste of ointment, which might have been sold for much money, and that money given to the poor? For Judas, though possessed of many good qualities, was troubled with two serious blemishes of character; the one being jealousy, and the other a certain fondness for money. And as regards the former, he bore a grudge against Mary of Magdala, by reason of a passion he had once entertained towards her and to which she did not respond. So that Jesus knowing full well all this, said, reprovingly: Let her alone, why dost thou worry her, seeing her action proceeds from the love in her heart? For when all is said, the poor ye have always with you, but me ye will not have always. Then he smiled just a little and added humourously: (125) Why, in that she poured this ointment upon me, she did it as it were, for my burial. And because of this, know that wherever in the whole world

the message will be proclaimed, this good deed of hers will be proclaimed with it as her memorial. And Jesus paused for a moment, and then he continued: Ye men! never say that which is slighting to woman, but learn to respect her, for she is the mother of the universe, and all the truth of divine creation dwells within her. And she is the basis of all that is good and beautiful, as also the seed of life and death, on whom depends the very existence of man, since in all her works she is his moral and natural support. Nay, in her travail she gives you birth, and watches over your growth; and therefore should ye bless and revere her, for she is your mainstay and truest friend upon earth. And so I say, honour her and protect her, that ye may not only win her love and her heart, but also thereby be righteous in the sight of God. And to those of you who are wedded, I say, see that ye love and respect your wives, for to-morrow they will be mothers, and in a little while perhaps, grandmothers of a whole nation. And let every one be submissive towards his wife, seeing her love ennobles man, softening his hardened heart, and taming as it were, the beast within him, transforming it into a lamb. For just as the God of Creation separated day from night, and the land from the waters, so does woman possess the divine power of separating good intentions from evil thoughts in men. And so, after God, should your highest thoughts belong to woman, seeing that to you she is the divine temple wherein you shall obtain perfect joy. Nay, from this temple, ye

should draw your moral strength, in that from thence ye can gain oblivion from your sorrows and the cares that beset your path. And so never indeed should man expose a woman to humiliation, for he who would humiliate her, humiliates himself a thousandfold, losing thereby the beautiful emotion and power of love; without which nothing can thrive here below (126).

2

And that same evening, Jesus, sitting in the garden, discoursed to those, his disciples, on the great cosmic scheme, telling them of the Divine Cycles as propounded in the Ancient Occult Books, and how the end of the present cycle might be discerned. For he said: Know that in those days, they who had power will take for themselves the riches and lands of the earth and will oppress the poor, employing them to increase their own riches (127). And because wickedness will prevail, the love and altruism of the majority will grow cold and fade. And there will be wars and great fear of wars, so that races will fight against races and country against country, and there will also be famines and earthquakes and pestilence in many places, and altogether great distress, far exceeding any that has ever been known in the history of the world. But learn further, that when all this comes to pass, the sign of the World Teacher (128) shall appear in the heavens, that by His advent,

the laws of God, which have been hidden by the traditions of ignorant men, shall be revealed anew. For as with the fig-tree, which while its branch is yet tender, puts forth its leaves, and thereby ye know that summer is close at hand, so when mankind shall see all these things, then may it know that this generation is at an end. And yet before that, many poor deluded prophets will arise, as also others, calling themselves Christs and Saviours of men (129); and they will perform wonders, and lead the unwary astray from the Right Hand Path of Wisdom onto the Left Hand Path of Power, working against the Divine Will of the Logos instead of in accordance therewith.

And then Jesus paused for a moment, after which he said: But know, that if I have spoken of the end of this generation, there are yet many many generations to come before the universe shall slumber once more in the bosom of God (130). Nevertheless this shall assuredly one day come to pass. And then just before the time of that Great Dissolution the mighty Judge and King, as it were, shall descend in His resplendence, and before Him all the nations will be gathered together, and He will separate them, just as a shepherd divides his sheep from his goats; the sheep on the right hand and the goats on the left. And then that King will say to those on the right: Come ye blessed ones and inherit your reward; the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was hungry and ye gave me to eat, and I was thirsty and ye gave me to drink, and I was a stranger

and ye took me in, and I was naked and ye gave me clothes. And when I was sick ye visited me, and while in prison ye came to bring me good cheer. And then many of those virtuous ones will answer him, saying: 'Lord! when did we see thee hungry and gave thee food, or thirsty and gave thee drink, or when did we see thee as a stranger and took thee in; or yet naked, or sick, or in prison, administering to thy wants whatever they might have been'? Then the King will answer: 'Know that I manifested myself to you in all created forms, and so I tell you, in that ye have done anything to the humblest of my children, ye have done it unto Me'. But to those who stand on his left side He will say: 'Depart from me ye evil and ignorant souls; seeing ye are not ready to inherit the Kingdom prepared for the righteous; for I was hungry and ye gave me no food, and thirsty and ye gave me no water, and a stranger and ye took me not in, nor did ye clothe me when I was naked, nor comfort me when in prison'. And they likewise will answer: 'Lord, when did we see Thee hungry or thirsty or naked, or yet in prison and failed to minister to any of Thy wants'? Then again He will answer: 'Know, I manifested Myself in all created forms, and so I tell you, in that ye did none of these things to the humblest of My children, ye did it not unto Me'. And so then the evil and the ignorant and the loveless will sink into oblivion for ages and ages, until once again the Universe be projected from the Heart of God; but those others, those perfected ones, will be unified with

Him, and rest in the Bosom of His Eternal Bliss.

And once more Jesus paused, and then looking lovingly on his listeners, he said: I have yet many things to say to you, but ye could not understand them now, though when ye have advanced far enough, the Spirit of Truth, entering into you, will guide you to all Truth; nay, then your own thoughts will be Truth themselves, and ye will realise the absolute verity of all I have taught you, and come to be nearer to me—as I to you—than ever ye have been before. And so it is well that soon I go from you in the flesh, for hitherto ye have always had me to lean upon in your difficulties, but without me, ever as it were at your beck and call, ye will progress the faster; and as I said, the Spirit of Truth will come to you all the sooner on that account. And although for a little while ye will lament and be sorrowful because ye see me no more in the flesh, yet know that your sorrow shall be turned into joy. For, just as a woman in travail suffers greatly before her time for giving birth has come, yet when she is delivered of her child, that suffering is forgotten by reason of her great joy, so will it be with you. For although ye may have sorrow in your hearts now because I go, when ye have attained the goal, ye will not only know absolute oneness with me, and so your hearts will be glad, but ye will have also reached that Bliss absolute and unconditional, which no man can ever take from you away. And so I have told you these things that ye might have hope and peace; for know, in the world you

will have sorrow, but be comforted, seeing I have taught you to overcome the world. And now the hour is late, let us go to rest.

3

And the next day Jesus walked over the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem, to preach in the temple-courts for the last time. And when the priests and the Pharisees saw his calm and majestic figure appearing once more in their midst, they said among themselves: Ha, then, strange indeed, but he has come back and not hid himself away after all. And now, will he remain over the festival, or will he hide himself away again? For altogether his actions seem to be outside the limits of surmise, and one can never divine what he will do next. But in any case, nothing can be done at the moment, for we are totally unprepared to stir up an uproar on the present occasion; nor is it necessary, for have we not a better plan altogether, and one through which we run hardly any risk at all? And they smiled complacently among themselves, saying as it were: Now we have outwitted this wonder-worker at last.

And in the meanwhile, Jesus stood up and began his discourse; and seeing his mission had reached its end, and knowing the intentions of his enemies in every detail, he had no compunction in speaking forth exactly what was in his mind. And so then after discoursing on the virtues essential to the Attainment of Peace, he told a parable selected

from his infinite fund, and said: Know that once a nobleman made a great feast, and invited all the rich and esteemed people of the land to the old castle where he lived. Now it so happened that the door leading to the banqueting hall was very low; so low indeed, that only by bowing their heads could his guests contrive to enter at all (131). And seeing they were very proud, they one and all utterly refused to bow their heads, so that they turned and went back home in anger and disgust, cursing that nobleman for daring to invite them at all. But that nobleman, having merely smiled to himself at the pride and folly of the rich and esteemed, instantly sent his servants to collect all the poor and despised and lowly, that they might come to the feast instead; which right gladly they did, so that the banqueting hall was filled to overflowing, as also the hearts of those guests with gratitude and joy. And now learn, that the Lord of Heaven and Earth, O, ye priests and Pharisees, spread a sumptuous feast, to which ye likewise were bidden, but finding the door to the banqueting hall so low, that, just as those other guests, ye needs must bow your heads in order to enter, ye refused to attend that feast at all; turning wrathfully from the door and heaping invectives on the servants of that Lord through whom ye were bidden. But the poor and lowly of spirit, and the courtesans and the publicans, they feared not to bow their heads, and so they went to that feast instead of you, and ate of its ambrosia and drank of its nectar, and as a result will never hunger or thirst again.

And Jesus paused for a moment, while there arose a mumur among the crowd of listeners. And then he said again: And now hear another parable: For once there was a householder who planted a vineyard, and after making a fence around it and digging a wine-tank, and building a lodge, let it out to husbandmen and went into another land. But when vintage-time approached, he sent his servants to receive from those husbandmen the wine: but instead of giving it, those evil husbandmen ill-treated his servants, killing one and beating a second almost to death; so that he needs must send others in their stead. But these again they treated exactly as the first. Then said that householder, on hearing what had occured: 'This is altogether terrible, and now it remains but for me to send my son; for surely those dastardly husbandmen will at least respect *him*, however much they may have ill-treated my servants! And so accordingly he sent his son, little dreaming what would occur. For those wicked husbandmen on beholding him, said, in their evil delight: 'This is the heir; come, we will kill him and so obtain his inheritance'. Whereupon they seized him and dragged him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him then and there. And now, what think ye will happen when the owner of that vineyard returns; for will he not have those husbandmen seized, and let them be punished by a terrible death, and then place that vineyard into the hands of honest men? And then turning to the priests, Jesus asked: Have ye never read in the Scriptures 'The stone which the builders

rejected has been made the capstone of the arch ? ' And so, ye men, who pose as men of God, alas ye stoned and killed the seers and messengers and prophets of God ; and therefore I tell you the Kingdom shall be taken away from you and given to others, and men whose speech ye cannot understand will stand between the living and the dead in spirit, and show the way to Eternal life. And in consequence of your deeds of blood, all these calamities shall befall this generation. And with a gesture of his hand towards the temple and the city, Jesus cried in a voice of infinite regretfulness : O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou who dost murder prophets, and stone those who have been sent to thee ! How often have I yearned to gather thy children to me, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wing, and ye would not come ! And now, behold your house will be left to you desolate, for I tell you, you will never see me again, until in the words of the Psalm ye say ' He who comes in the name of the Lord is blessed ' (*a*). And then the mighty eloquence of Jesus ceased, and the crowd was greatly stirred, as he stepped down from the raised place on which he had stood. But the priests, although they were moved with anger and superstitious fear, nevertheless held their peace, and took no measures to do him a violence ; for that night they had bought over Judas to betray Jesus ; and so they felt secure, that in a very little while their enemy would be delivered into their hands.

(*a*) *i.e.* When the generation has attained to spiritual discernment it will recognise a true Adept or World Teacher when He appears again in their midst.

4

So then Jesus withdrew from the crowds, and together with his disciples, wandered back over the Mount of Olives towards Bethany, ascending its white limestone rugged path beneath the shade of the olives and fig trees, with here and there an apricot and terebinth and hawthorn. But as they reached the summit, Jesus turned and looked back on the city; where Herod's temple could be seen in its resplendence, with its terraces and vast porticoes, and its sculpturing of white marble incrusted with jasper and porphyry, and its dazzling roof of gold and silver (132). And he said to his companions: Do ye see this wonderful panorama of loveliness stretched before us, with the temple as the pinnacle of its grandeur? And yet I tell you, the time will come when not one stone of that supernal building will be left standing.

And it was the Thursday, so in the afternoon, Jesus said to one of his disciples—the one whom he loved best and whose name was John: This is God's remembrance day, and this evening we will eat the pascal supper together. And to that end, go into Jerusalem, to our friend Nicodemus, and say to him: 'The teacher asks thee to set apart your hall, that he may eat his last passover with his disciples'. Fear not to ask this, for he will be glad to grant our request. And if thou wilt, Peter can go with thee. Whereupon those two disciples set forth to do their Master's bidding; and finding Nicodemus, obtained from him the assurance that

an upper room in his house should be got in readiness, and a supper prepared.

So then towards evening, Jesus set out with his few disciples and Judas the treasurer; but as they came to the room where the supper was prepared, some of them began to argue as to who might sit next to the Master, for they knew full well it would be the last time, seeing all he had told them. But Jesus with a reproachful smile said: My friends, would ye think of self at this hour, and strive for seats of honour? Know that he who contents himself with the humblest seat is always the most worthy of true honour. And then in order to show them once and for all a lesson in true humility, he took the basin containing water, and the towel used for the washing of the hands and feet before the meal, and bending over one of his disciples began to wash his feet, saying: To all of you I will do this, because of my love for you. And may these feet walk in the Way of Goodness for evermore.

But when it came to be Peter's turn, he protested, saying: Master, this must not be, for I cannot allow thee to demean thyself thus. But Jesus answered: If thou wilt not permit me to do this, thou hast no true unity with me, and dost not understand the symbol of my deed. For as I have washed my disciples' feet, so ought ye to wash one another's, for the spirit of service is the password into the Kingdom of Heaven. And so I have set an example, that to others, ye should do what I have done to you. So then Peter said fervently:

O Master, forgive me for my lack of understanding ; nay, wash not only my feet but even my hands and my head. But Jesus smiled, as if to himself, and answered : That is not necessary, seeing he who is clean of body needs but wash his feet ; for you, my disciples are clean of body and also of heart. And then for a moment he hesitated and speaking with a tone of regret, more to himself than to the others, he added : And yet, not *all* of you are clean of heart.

And as he said this, instantly those disciples looked at him and at one another askance—for his words shot into their hearts, as it were, like a poisoned arrow, adding a stab of sharp pain to the sorrow that was already there. But Jesus gave no sign ; moreover his face was averted in the act of putting the basin and towel away against the wall. Nor when he came to the table was his countenace anything but calm and impenetrable, as he gave thanks for the food that was spread before them. But those disciples remained very troubled, so that John, who was nearest to him said : Master, thy words have fallen upon us all like a heavy burden which we cannot dispel, and unless we know their meaning, we cannot eat what is before us, for we have no taste for anything at all. Then said Jesus, speaking with deliberation : I said not all of you were clean of heart, because there is one amongst you who will this night betray me ; and so it is through one of my own followers I shall come to my execution. And instantly all those disciples shrank into themselves, so to say,

as if his words had been a blow; and with faces on which perplexity and consternation and dismay settled like indelible shadows, they cried, speaking altogether: Surely, it is not I? And who could be so dastardly as to turn traitor? And certainly there must be some fatal mistake! But Jesus said, speaking again with calm deliberation: Seeing ye will know very soon whether I tell you or not, then perhaps it is best ye should know now. Learn therefore that he who has this moment put his hand with me into this dish, will betray me to-night.

And then they all looked at Judas with expressions of horror, shrinking from him as if he were a serpent crawling in their midst, instead of a man; for they now knew it was he. And in their indignation, some of them all but lost control of themselves, and would have thrust him forth then and there, had not Jesus stayed them with a look. And he said very calmly: Know that the prophets speak truth, and this son of man must be betrayed; and yet—and he looked at Judas with a great compassion—alas for him who betrays his master. And because of that look, which stabbed the heart of Judas more than a veritable volcano of anger, he arose from the table, overcome with the sense of his own treachery, and the shame and awfulness of his deed; and although he longed to retract, yet he feared the result of breaking his promise to the priests, lest they should put him to death. But as he turned to go, Jesus said: My friend, do quickly what thou hast undertaken to do. After which, Judas, looking at no-one, went out by the door.

And then, when he had gone, a heavy sigh, which was half relief and half an utterable sorrow, arose from the company, as if an awful presence had withdrawn from the room. And only Jesus remained unperturbed; for with a smile, which was at once compassionate and reassuring, and yet contained a suspicion of loving reproachfulness, he said: Although righteous indignation is excusable at times, and even laudable in some instances, yet those who would take the Kingdom of Heaven by force, so to say, must be beyond even that. And so rather should ye pity your brother with a very ocean of pity, than envelop him in the clouds of your anger and disgust; for his own deed will bring its own consequences, terrible to contemplate, in the shape of a veritable hell of remorse and despair, and shame, seeming to discern no end. But that is not all; for as he had done to me, so will the Great Law, as ye all know, deal with him; and therefore as I pity him from the depths of my being, so should ye also, because of Love. And now, therefore, let us dispel all discord from our minds, and let us eat of our supper together in harmony and peace and love, that it may ever be a beautiful and inspiring remembrance, until unified in the celestial realms, we shall eat the ambrosia (*a*) of the Divine Wisdom and drink the nectar of the

(*a*) If this story had been written some fifteen centuries ago and become a "gospel" such is the tendency of mankind to create dogma and literalize everything, that this sentence would be made to imply that souls in heaven ate and drank, just as some people believe they will play harps and sing eternal hymns around a Throne of Glory.

Eternal Bliss of God. But until then, be not sorrowful for me, seeing I will not suffer; for he who has once attained to the consciousness with the All-Father is not racked by the pains of the flesh which are as nought, and utterly insignificant in the face of that unutterable Bliss.

And then, all having partaken of the food which was spread before them, Jesus stood up, and lifting his hands in blessing, and raising his eyes heavenwards, he said: Father, the hour is come; mayest Thou cause the Christ to shine in the hearts of these my disciples as Thou hast caused It to shine in this Thy son, having given him the power to subdue the flesh and overcome its illusions, that he should give the divine Arcanum to others; for only knowledge of Thee is Eternal Life. I have revealed Thy perfections to those Thou gavest me from out the world, for truly they were Thine, and now they know that whatever Thou hast given me is from Thee, for Thy truths it was I taught them, as Thou on Thy part didst teach me; and they received them and have known that I am of Thee. And Divine Father, keep them true to Thy Name, that they may be unified even as Thou and I. And yet not only for these, my disciples, do I pray, but for all those who receive through them the message which Thou has sent through me, that all may be one. And the love with which Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I and Thou also in them. AMUN.

And as Jesus spoke, the disciples bowed their heads in the twilight of that room, through the windows of which a thin moon peeped sadly,

mingling its pale beams with the kindled lights on the long table, and a faint fragrance of flowers. And from far away, the song of a nightingale, rising above an almost inaudible hum of voices from the city streets, came as it were, into the silence of that room. And then suddenly a stifled sob was heard, for John had fallen on the bosom of his Master, and was weeping from the tenderness of his heart.

5

So then in a little while the company descended the stairs into the street; but just as they went out of the door, a Roman guard approached, for he had been waiting outside. And after saluting, he said: Which one of you is the preacher from Galilee? And Jesus said: Is it me, Jesus, thou dost seek? And the man replied: Yes, for I bear a message from the governor, who desires to see thee privately. Know that the priests have stirred up the people against thee, so that thy life is in danger, and Pilate would confer with thee immediately in order to contrive thy escape, therefore thou art bidden to come with me without delay. Then the disciples looked at Jesus with joy in their faces, for they thought, After all he need not die, and here is a great good fortune come our way, and we shall keep the Master in spite of everything. But Jesus said soberly: Your thoughts are based upon wrong surmises; but seeing Pilate would do me a kindness, I will go to him;

but do ye walk to the vale by the Kidron and wait for me there, for the Governor I would see alone.

So then the disciples departed, while Jesus accordingly went with the guard to the Governor's palace, where he was conducted to an inner chamber in which the grave-faced and large and rather imposing figure of Pilate sat awaiting his arrival. And after the guard had withdrawn, he said to Jesus, without any preamble : Thou hast a disciple, Joseph of Arimathea by name, and he is my friend as well as thine, and is in much concern about thee, having come to me here soliciting my intervention on thy behalf, for thy life is in great danger, as perhaps thou knowest—or perhaps not. But be that as it may, the Pharisees and Scribes have stirred up a number of the untutored people against thee to a state of frenzy and blood-thirstiness, which only can have one termination. For know that already those same priests sent to me, begging my aid in bringing about thy death ; but I refused, for I have nothing against thee and would be sorry to behold thee come to harm. And yet, seeing the turn events have now taken, there is but one thing I can do for thee, and that is to order thy safe conduct to the border ; for it were an easy matter for a little band of my horsemen, well armed, to escort thee beyond the reach of danger this very night (133). Then said Jesus : A noble prince has Cæsar in his Pilate, and thy words arise from a kindness I know full well how to appreciate ; and yet thine offer I may not accept, for only the coward flees in the face of danger, and to do this on my

part were to render all my teachings nugatory in the eyes of my followers, so that with one stroke, as it were, I would be undoing all the work I have ever done, and be as a preceptor divorced from the power of example, which is often the greater of the two. And so, although I thank thee with true sincerity—yet, as I said—thy offer I cannot accept. Then said Pilate, aggrieved: Young man, thy heroism is laudable indeed, and yet, is it not misplaced, for are there not other cities where thou couldst teach thy doctrines far away from these perfidious Jews (*a*) and their foolish observances, upon whom thy teachings are utterly wasted? Moreover, is not the living body of a man of more utility than his dead corpse? Come, my friend, I am an older man than thou art, and so can speak to thee a little as a father; therefore be persuaded, and waste not thy life on those who comprehend thee not at all, and whose only gratitude consists in wishing to stone thee to death. Then said Jesus with a faint smile: Thy words are born of a noble intention, and yet they arise from only a partial knowledge of the circumstances of the case, into which I cannot enter; nevertheless that being so, for the third and last time, I must decline thy offer, for I am absolutely resolved, and nothing can deter me from my course. So saying, he bowed before Pilate and withdrew. And then under the cover of the darkness, Jesus made his way to the Valley of the Kidron, and to an orchard where one, Massalian (134), lived, and where Jesus often had been before.

(*a*) It is well known that Pilate hated the Jews.

6

But in the meantime, Judas, having left the house of Nicodemus, directed his steps to the abode of the priests, in order to apprise them of the whereabouts of Jesus, according to the pre-arranged plan. And yet as he went, all the while he was torn with irresolution, seeing that plan had turned out contrary to his expectations ; and he would gladly have withdrawn from its execution, but as already said, was deterred from so doing because of fear. For it must be known that the high priests, having been approached by the enemies of Jesus and the case put to them, had in their turn approached Judas, for they saw that their religion stood in jeopardy, and acted according to their lights. And so they said to him : Look thou here, thou art a man of sense, and dost conduct the business of thy Master and his band of disciples, and so to thee we can talk, and perhaps come to some arrangement agreeable to both parties. For know, that for private reasons we desire to speak with thy Master alone, but seeing he is always surrounded by others, we have never succeeded in bringing this about, and so, if thou canst contrive an interview for us, we are ready to pay thee for thy pains. Then Judas reasoned with himself saying : What are these priests after, and would they merely learn from him certain secrets, or would they endeavour to do him a harm ? And yet, whichever it be, he can protect himself, and if necessary disappear from their midst, as he has done before, leaving them more convinced

that he is a great Master than ever they were before, and that far from doing any harm, will teach them a lesson, and who knows, but do good to our cause in addition. But lastly there is the money which is not to be despised; besides nobody will be any the wiser, and even if the Master divines the truth by any chance (for that is not unlikely, seeing he divines most things), well, he will forgive me. And then as he reflected, those priests said: Well, come, what is thy answer? And yet perhaps thou dost hesitate, not knowing the sum we propose to give? Then Judas said: What is the sum? And after a moment's reflection, they replied: We will give thee thirty pieces of silver; moreover we will give it to thee now. But take heed, if thou dost accept the sum and then dost fail to carry out thy promise, we will have thee arrested as a felon, and an evil fate will befall thee.

So then Judas accepted the money; but after all that had transpired, it burned into his flesh, through his pocket as it were, like glowing coals, so that he yearned to hand it back to those designing priests, and withdraw, as already said, from carrying out the plan. And so, as once again he stood before them, this time with an utterly crest-fallen face, he hesitated and shuffled, torn betwixt loyalty to his Master and fear of those priests. And they said sharply: How now! why this hesitation? thou hast had thy money, art thou trying to extract more from us by thy dissatisfied looks? Then Judas stammered and said: Far from asking for more money, I would ask you to take back that which

ye have already given, and so release me from my promise, for my Master has found out, and now I am as a traitor in his eyes.

Then those priests were overcome with fury, and they threatened and brow-beat Judas, and cursed and swore and hurled invectives upon him, till he in his turn, becoming infuriated, forgot his fears altogether and looked at his opponents defiantly in the face. And he cried, throwing the money on the ground at their feet: Take back your lucre and do your worst, for I doubt not my Master is down by the vale of Kidron where he often goes, but if ye find him, know he will elude you and your quest will be in vain, and ye will but appear ridiculous in each other's eyes, as also in the eyes of those ye take with you; for my Master has powers at his command by which he could tear you all asunder if he so willed. And now I know full well ye have evil designs upon him, and the private reasons of which ye spoke were none other than murderous reasons; but take heed, for, as I said, my Master could annihilate you all even with a glance of the eye, and if he does, I shall be glad, seeing ye will only get what ye deserve. So saying, Judas turned and walked quickly from the room.

But those priests, having discovered what they wanted to know, thought not to restrain him, accounting him but an infuriated fool. Nevertheless when he had gone, they said: Who knows but what there may be a shadow of truth in his words; though truly it matters little, for those we send

to apprehend this wizard will be the victims of his miraculous powers, if so they be, and not we ourselves. Whereupon, they immediately gave instructions to the temple officers to proceed to the Valley of the Kidron, and arrest Jesus, and bring him back to them at once.

7

And in the meanwhile, Jesus sat waiting with his disciples in the orchard called Gethsemane. And he said to them very lovingly : My friends, some of you will be ashamed of your master to-night and will desert him, fearing to be known as one of his company ; for although the spirit of love is strong, yet the flesh is weak at the hour of trial. But Peter vehemently protested saying : Lord, I am ready to go with thee both to prison and to death if it must be ; for if all the world were ashamed of thee, yet I would not be ashamed. And Jesus smiled, just a very little, as if to himself ; and answered : He, who because of love, would be ready to lose his life for his Master, would not only retain it but be repaid a thousandfold. And yet, O Peter, ever impulsive and ready with thy words, know, that before the cock crows at dawn, thou wilt have denied that thou knowest me at all. But again Peter vehemently protested, so that again Jesus smiled, looking kindly upon him as one looks at a boastful child ; but he said no more. Then cried John with fervour : O Master, why must all this be ; can I not die in thy stead ? And Jesus

embraced him, and answered in tones of ineffable affection: My beloved, thy words arise from the essence of truth which lies in thy selfless heart. And yet that cannot be, even if I would permit it, which indeed I will not; besides as yet thou hast not learned to die, as it were, and to rise again; and so thou wouldest really die, and thy death would be, it is true, an example of nobility to the very few who would ever know, but not an example that death (*a*) can be overcome. For I desire mankind to know that what one man can do, all men can do; seeing for that reason I left the solitudes and came into the world of men. For what would be the value of all teachings unless the taught could one day do as the teacher himself? And now my loved ones, I would withdraw for a while to enter into my meditations; and so to you all I say farewell, and give you my blessings; for in a very short while the officers will be here to arrest me. But thou, John, wilt accompany me, for to thee I have still something to impart.

And then as Jesus withdrew, those disciples said among themselves: Wonderful is our Master, for at the hour of trial, not even a shadow is there upon his face, which is as serene and calm and benign as ever it was. And surely this is the greatest of all his powers; for who knows what awful disaster is in store? And yet, even now, he could make his escape, as he has done before, if only he would;

(*a*) *i.e.* that which would kill the generality of mankind but not the Adept, and therefore *seem* as death to the man in the street.

but although he was ready to save others, he will not save himself. And so they spoke among themselves, as an awful sadness settled upon them in that dark orchard, peopled by sinister shadows cast by the trees because of the moon; a sadness born of terrible forebodings and suspense, and a feeling of an irreparable loss. And there was a ghostly hush, for not a leaf stirred in the trees; and yet every moment one or other of those disciples started, thinking he heard a noise in the distance, to find it was but the snapping of a twig, or a little field-mouse running among the rests of yester-year's leaves.

And so they sat and waited, while moments passed seeming more like hours; the light of the moon increasing the while, as that pallid orb of night ascended the lapis-lazuli sky. And then, suddenly they heard the sound of footsteps coming along the pathway in the valley, and also the sound of murmuring voices, which steadily increased; and at that same moment Jesus and John came from the farther end of the orchard; and waving his hand to the disciples, the Master said calmly: My time is come, for here are the officers approaching to arrest me. So saying he passed out of the orchard and onto the road to meet them, alone.

And then, as the little band of men came upon him, he said: Friends! whom is it ye seek? And they answered,—for they could not see very well in the dim light, in spite of their lanterns: We seek Jesus, the Nazarene. And the Master replied, in a friendly tone: Then ye seek not in vain, for

I am he. Then said the chief officer: We come to arrest thee on very grave charges, and therefore I must bid my men bind thee. But Jesus said with a kindly smile: What! are ye come out as if against a thief, with sticks and swords, regarding me as a veritable Samson of strength? Surely none of these things is necessary, for was I not daily with you in the temple, doing no harm to anyone? Then the chief officer said deferentially: Sir, although I am persuaded that in thy case none of these things is necessary, yet I do but obey orders in having thee secured. Whereupon he motioned to his men to bind Jesus' hands, adding in an undertone: But see that ye do not hurt him, for he is quite submissive.

But the rabble, which had joined the officers, being disappointed at so unsensational a spectacle, and longing for a fray, shouted: This is the ringleader, but what of the others? And they immediately set upon the disciples who had emerged from the orchard and followed their Master. And in consequence, there was a skirmish; for the disciples defended themselves against this onslaught; and Peter, as it happened, being a man of considerable strength, having wrested a club from one of his attackers, gave him a blow on the ear, which not only rendered him almost insensible but also caused him to bleed profusely, and to suffer an agony of pain. Then finally the officers intervened, putting an end to the matter by flourishing their swords; while Jesus told his disciples to withdraw lest further bloodshed should occur. But to the man who had

received the injury, and who turned out to be a servant of the High Priest, Jesus said kindly: Come, I am sorry that any of my followers should have done thee a hurt; and now, my friend, be thou healed! And lo! in a very few moments, all the pain was gone, and the blood ceased to flow and that man was cured. Then said Jesus, with a smile to the officers who held him: See, I am entirely harmless, so be under no concern that I shall attempt to elude you. And now lead the way and take me wherever ye will.

VIII

I

And so then those officers led Jesus to the Palace of Caiaphas, the high priest of the Jews, while the rabble, as he was conducted along the road, increased in number, making a noise and attracting the attention even of some of the slumbering citizens of Jerusalem, who got up from their beds and looked out of their windows to see what the disturbance might be. And in the wake of that strange little crowd followed Peter and John at a safe distance, and still further back, some of the other disciples; for they separated into twos and threes for expediency's sake, fearing another skirmish after what had already occurred. But as the crowd came to a halt outside the Palace, John, knowing one of the attendants, thought to gain admittance; so coming at length to the outside of the crowd, he finally edged his way through, together with his companion, and with the aid of his acquaintance contrived to enter the courtyard, where he and Peter remained, anxiously waiting to learn the fate of their Master.

And it so happened that after they had been seated there for some time, one of the Palace servants, crossing the courtyard, and espying a

stranger, said to Peter : For whom art thou waiting, O sad-faced man, art thou also a follower of the prophet in yonder hall, like thy companion ? Then said Peter, fearing to incriminate himself, and yet in his confusion producing the very effect he wished to avoid : Far from being his follower I do not know him at all. And so that servant laughed, and made no answer, giving him a significant look instead. But John gazed at him very reproachfully, touched to the quick by his cowardice, and the denial of the Master ; though he also said not a word. And then in a very little while they both could hear in the distance the crowing of a cock ; and Peter, overcome with shame and sorrow (for he remembered what Jesus had said), arose and went out of the courtyard, and having made his way through the crowd, and finding a deserted street, wept long and bitterly, as if his heart must break.

But meanwhile Jesus stood in the hall of audience, before Caiaphas and his other accusers, listening with indifference to the charges brought against him and to the questions he was asked ; for although his body stood in that hall, yet his soul was, as it were, elsewhere, above the toils and stress of external things. And Caiaphas said to the assembly : Ye representatives of the Jewish people, what are your accusations against this man ? And a scribe arose and answered, reading from a scroll : We have it against this man that he has uttered blasphemy by declaring himself to be one with God ; further that he profanes our sabbath

by healing and doing other work; and that he is a wizard, and performs wonders through the agency of demons, and hence is a danger to the people and to the State. Then said Caiaphas to Jesus: Thou hast heard the charges, what hast thou to say in thy defence? And Jesus answered: I make no defence; for, to those who are endowed with discernment, the publicity of my doings is a defence in itself, seeing that my works I have done openly in your courts and thoroughfares in the full light of day, and not as the thief who needs the darkness in which to ply his mistaken vocation lest he be caught. Then said Caiaphas: And thou dost not deny thou hast proclaimed thyself to be one with God? And Jesus answered: To those who are ready to understand the significance of the phrase, yes, but not to the profane who lack understanding of the spirit. Then exclaimed Caiaphas triumphantly to the assembly: It is enough; in our very presence he has convicted himself of blasphemy; and now he is liable to the death penalty. And he tore his clothes. Then he gave orders that Jesus be confined, until the hour when he should be brought before the Governor; for this was necessary ere any man could be put to death.

2

Now it must be known that the Palace of Pilate, the Governor, was situated in the upper city to the south-west of the temple hill, and was called

Herod's Praetorium; having been once the abode of a provincial king. And it was a monument of magnificence, adorned with carved porticos and columns of variegated marble, and between its immense wings there was a great open space paved with mosaics, and containing beautiful fountains and large tanks and promenades of grass. And so to this Palace early in the morning Jesus was led in the company of the Sanhedrists and priests, headed by Caiaphas himself, while following behind was the vast mob, which the agents of the Pharisees had stirred up. But seeing that Pilate was a Gentile (and therefore for any Jew to enter his abode meant to defile himself and render himself unfit to eat the Passover), on arriving in the courtyard the procession halted, and word was sent by the guard begging Pilate's presence without.

And it so happened that just having arisen, he was that moment eating his morning meal in the company of his wife; so that when the guardsman appeared summoning him to the courtyard, he was neither in a humour nor in a hurry to comply with the demand. And he said to his wife: I am weary of these turbulent people, with their countless grievances and their superstitions, which leave me no peace whatever, so that they come even at this hour of the morning, and probably all about nothing. And turning to the guardsman he said: Hast thou learned what is the nature of the trouble? And he answered: It is, I think, that man from Galilee who preaches in the public places, and, I take it, has said something to offend the Jews;

for there is a great stir, and the priests have brought him hither themselves. Then said Pilate's wife: Very strange it is, but last night I dreamt of that man, and that he was put to death; and my dream was horrible and like an ill omen and a warning to thee, Pilate, that thou shouldst take heed what thou doest. And Pilate answered: Alas, already have I tried to influence that man to flee for his own good from this accursed country, but he would not harken to me, and now, who knows but what I may be forced to do something against my will, lest the people rise up, and there be a perfect revolution in the place. And he arose from his seat, cursing beneath his breath in his irritation, as he said: Well, there is, I suppose, nothing for it, but for me to go to them and see what's to be done.

So then, without further delay, Pilate appeared on the elevated promenade, and looking down on the crowds, said peremptorily: What means this commotion at such an early hour of the morning? And the spokesman answered: Sire, we bring before thee an evil and seditious man, who has been tried before the Sanhedrim and been proved guilty; nay, in our very presence he has convicted himself of the most heinous offence against our law, so that we demand he be sentenced to death. Then said Pilate curtly: What is that offence? And another spokesman answered: Blasphemy; but that is not all, for there are other things as well. Then Pilate, after allowing a smile of sarcasm to cross his lips, which said as it were, How can ye

expect me to sympathise with you respecting such a superstitious folly, answered: Such a matter does not concern me, seeing ye have your own law, and are at liberty to judge and to execute without appealing to me. Then the High Priest, taking the word, said: We have no right to execute a man upon the cross; and yet our counsellors consider the crimes of this man are worthy of such a death. Then Pilate was filled with indignation and disgust, and he answered coldly: Give me your document of charges against this man and I will examine him for myself. And he gave orders that the prisoner should be conducted within the palace.

So then in a little while Jesus stood before Pilate in the judgment hall; and after having first dismissed the guards, that governor said sorrowfully: Headstrong man, why didst thou not flee, as I begged thee; for now who knows what will come to pass, and this time I may be utterly powerless to save thee. And Jesus answered: My friend, thou didst give me one chance, and if I would not take it, it is my fault and not thine. And while he spoke, Pilate glanced at the scroll on which the charges against him were written. And presently he said: What is thy answer to these trumpery charges? dost thou really consider thyself to be a King (*a*), as these people make out; and the Son of God, whatever that may mean? Then said Jesus dispassionately: I came into this country

(*a*) It must be remembered that John the Baptist had used the word "King" symbolically in reference to Jesus—see Part III of this story.

to preach Truth to those who were ready to receive, and not to exalt myself in the eyes of men Then said Pilate: What *is* Truth? But not waiting for an answer, he arose and went out once more to the crowd.

3

And in the meanwhile, the people of Jerusalem had begun to stir, and finding that something untoward was going on in the courtyard of the Praetorium, they joined the crowd, so that it increased considerably in size. But although a large proportion of it was hostile, yet among its numbers were many followers of Jesus, including Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, whom the disciples had summoned in hopes that through their influence, the Master might be saved. For it so happened that these two men were members of the Sanhedrim at the time; but the High Priest, knowing them to be in favour of Jesus, had purposely omitted to call them to his palace the previous night; seeing it was not incumbent on every member of that body to be present on all occasions. And so, when the disciples apprised them of what had occurred, they were deeply chagrined, setting out | immediately to the Praetorium to see if anything could still be done.

Now, having left Jesus within the Judgment Hall, Pilate again appeared before the people; and at his approach there was a sudden hush, as the crowd stood on the very pinnacle, as it were, of expectation

And he said, speaking with great deliberation: I have examined this man, and I cannot find any fault in him worthy of death. But scarcely had he uttered the words, when a perfect tempest arose from the assembly, in the form of hisses and shouts on the one hand, and applause on the other, so that for some minutes all was confusion and a chaos of noise which threatened to end in a fight, had not Pilate intervened. For in a voice of thunder he shouted: Unless this uproar cease immediately, I will give orders that the courtyard be cleared.

So then his words having taken effect, there was once more a silence, so that Nicodemus, seizing the opportunity, put up his hand, and said: Sire, may I be granted the favour of speaking in this man's defence? And Pilate answered: Fear not to speak what is in thy mind. And Nicodemus began: I am, as thou knowest, a member of the Sanhedrim; and yet when the prisoner was tried by that Council, I was not summoned to appear, seeing it was deemed I should speak in his favour. For when it came to my ears that he was to be apprehended, I spoke to the Elders and the Priests and Levites, telling them he had wrought many wonderful cures, and was in every way a holy and righteous man; therefore it were an evil deed, born of injustice, to convict him of crimes of which he is innocent. Then one of the priests, turning towards Nicodemus, said with scorn: .What is this! Hast thou also become his disciple, that thou makest speeches in his favour? And Nicodemus answered coldly: As well might one say the Governor himself

had become his follower, seeing he also speaks in his defence (135). And again signs of an uproar began to manifest themselves, so that again Pilate needs must command silence.

Then a certain aged Jew lifted his hand, begging that he also might be heard; so that on receiving Pilate's consent, he said: I lay by the sheep-pool down yonder, labouring under a great infirmity, and thinking to cure myself in its waters at the time when the Angel stirs them (136). But whenever I tried to enter, I was pushed aside by others, against which I was too feeble to strive. And then it so happened that the holy man, who is now a prisoner, saw me there one day, and taking pity on me said: 'Wouldst thou like to be cured?' And I said: 'O Sir, if only I had someone who would help to put me into the pool, I should be indeed grateful, but I have no-one at all'. And then he smiled and said: 'Thou canst be cured without that'. And taking me by the hand he said: 'Come, thou art cured now, take up thy mattress and go in peace'. And O Sire, wonderful it is, and surpassing strange, but from that day, I have never ailed again. And as he finished speaking, Pilate nodded approval; but some of the Pharisees who were present shouted: O yes, we know all about thy story, but one thing thou hast taken good care to omit, namely that thou wast cured on the Sabbath day, so thou art a culprit as well as thy healer. And turning to Pilate, they said: Did we not tell thee, this man from Galilee wrought his cures on the Sabbath, and cast out devils by the agency of the devil himself? But Pilate

only answered coldly: The accusation is hardly consistent with logic, and therefore impresses me not at all.

And after that, a number of other people spoke in favour of Jesus, having been cured of various infirmities at his hands. And there was also a woman who endeavoured to plead, but immediately she was silenced by the people, in that the Jews cried out: We have a law whereby it is decreed that no woman shall be permitted to give evidence. And then finally, an old man contended that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, after he had lain four days in the tomb.

And so on hearing all this, Pilate, appealing to the crowd, said: Ye have heard all this evidence, and now I ask you, what will it profit you to shed the blood of an innocent man? But they shouted vehemently: He is not innocent, and we demand his blood; he is a danger to the nation, let him be stoned, let him be crucified. So that again there was a violent uproar. Then Pilate became filled with anger, and after sharply ordering the guards to threaten the crowds with their swords, he said—when silence was once more restored: Your nation has always been seditious, and ye are ever up in arms against your benefactors, for ye would have killed Moses and Aaron, and were ever murmuring against your God and his prophets. And now the prisoner, waiting within, has been another benefactor to you, having cured your sick and blind and lame, but instead of being grateful, ye seek to put him to death. And Pilate paused

for a moment, then he added : Let those witnesses who have spoken in favour of the prisoner come with me into the Judgment Hall, that I may examine them for myself. Whereupon, he turned his back upon the crowd and entered into the Palace.

So then, in a little while, Nicodemus, to the disgust and consternation of the priests, made his way up the steps, in company with the other witnesses ; being conducted into the Hall by the guards, so that no-one dared to interfere. And then, when all were assembled in the Judgment Hall, Pilate said : What is to be done ? For I refuse to convict the innocent ; and yet, seeing the turn things have taken, there is likely to be a riot unless we can conciliate the people by some means. And so they held a conference in that hall, while the crowd waited impatiently outside, only kept in order through fear of the guards. And finally after much deliberation, Pilate hit upon a plan to which the others agreed, rather for want of a better one, than the assurance it would succeed. And so, leaving the others, that he might carry it into effect, he appeared once again before that restive crowd. And he said, looking down upon them : Ye have a custom, that at the Feast of the Passover, I should release to you one prisoner ; now there is a murderer called Barabbas who is guilty of death, and there is Jesus, who not having trangressed against our Roman law, is not guilty of death ; therefore, I say to you, let Jesus be released. But immediately they all cried out vehemently : No, no, release Barabbas ; we demand that Jesus be crucified.

And they continued to shout, waving their hands and flourishing their sticks in a transport of hostility and passion. Then said Pilate at last, again aroused to anger: This man is guiltless in my eyes and in the eyes of Roman law, therefore I wash my hands of the whole matter, for I am innocent of his blood. Whereupon he turned and went back into the Palace without another word.

And then, being once more in the presence of the little assembly in the Judgment Hall, where Jesus stood in the midst of his friends, he said, addressing him sorrowfully: Although I refuse to sentence thee to a malefactor's death, yet seeing thou hast transgressed against the Jewish law and hast been found guilty by the Sanhedrim, I am powerless to protect thee, and so must reluctantly deliver thee into the hands of the authorities, who will deal with thee themselves. Alas, hadst thou but followed my advice and fled, thou wouldst not have brought this upon thyself; and so, although I find no other fault in thee, thou art headstrong and daring to the extent of recklessness, and this has been thy downfall. And Jesus bowed, as he answered with kindly simplicity: Sire, I thank thee, and hold thee totally innocent of my blood. And now let thy officers lead me away, for long enough hast thou been troubled on my behalf.

4

So then, immediately, Jesus was handed over by Pilate's guards to the Jewish soldiers, who

bound him and kept watch over him, while the priests held a council in order to decide on what should be done. For Caiaphas contended that Jesus could not be crucified, seeing Pilate had not given his consent; while the others maintained that by reason of the violent attitude on the part of the people, this was not only permissible but also expedient; moreover, they added: Has not Pilate washed his hands of the whole matter, thereby leaving Jesus entirely to us? Besides which, on occasions when the voice of the people has been uplifted against a transgressor, have we not often discarded the sanction of the Governor and executed him without any dire result? And surely here is a case in point, for do we not desire this Jesus of Nazareth to be set up as a warning against defying our laws and sacred traditions, lest others should follow in his steps? Especially as he has many disciples, nay, even men in authority, such as Nicodemus, who actually spoke in his favour.

Then another member of the council arose, and he said: It is not well to execute this criminal without the sanction of Pilate, and in this I am also in accord with Caiaphas, our High Priest. And yet there is a card we have not played as yet, although it be the highest of all. For if we go privately to the Governor, we can surely force his hand, since we have good reasons to believe that the real aim of this Jesus is to cause a rising of the people against the Roman administration, so that eventually he himself might be crowned King of the Jews. Nay, do not a portion of the people already

regard him as the Messiah; so that, seeing all this is the case, we have a formidable weapon in our hands to overcome this obdurate Pilate; for we can assure him he is no friend of Cæsar, unless he concedes to our demands. Then the body of those priests answered in one accord: Well said, thy speech is admirable and to the point; and now the plan needs but carrying into effect, for not only is it worthy of trial, but we think it must surely succeed.

So at length it was decided that Caiaphas himself should go privately to Pilate; which he accordingly did. And although at first the Governor was deeply loth to alter his decision, when pressure was brought to bear he found himself between the horns of a dilemma, constituted on the one hand by his own sanction of the shedding of the blood of a man he would fain have saved, and a riot on the other, which coming to the ears of Cæsar, would place him in a very unfavourable, if not disloyal light. And so very reluctantly he yielded at last, knowing full well that Jesus was to lose his life in any case, seeing he could not prevent him from being stoned by order of the Jewish law. And then it was finally decreed that Jesus be crucified in the company of two thieves that very day; being thought inexpedient to delay his execution till after the Passover, lest his followers should stir up a riot in his defence.

And meanwhile, outside the place where Jesus was being guarded, the rabble had waited in a tumult of impatience, born of lust for sensation

and cruelty and bigotry and superstitious fear. But when it became known that the Governor had given way after all, and that Jesus was to be crucified, there arose a great shout of diabolical triumph, followed by a storm of execrations, as Jesus himself, and also the two thieves, appeared in the midst of the body of soldiers which were to conduct him to the place of execution. And yet, although the centre and target of all that never-ceasing tempest of excitement, his own face, as if the more to contrast with, and shame the faces of his persecutors, was calm and emotionless, and as utterly unaffected and unimpressionable as the adamant rock upon which the angry waves beat at the height of the tide. And so that procession by slow degrees made its way towards Golgotha ; a place situated near the walls of the city, but outside Jerusalem, being a bare hill resembling the crown of a skull, as its name implies. And then when finally it reached this ill-omened hill, on which was the execution ground (a circle enclosed with ropes, so as to keep back the spectators), the soldiers took the crosses from their victims — seeing it was the custom that every malefactor should bear his own instrument of torture—and proceeded to make all ready for carrying out the sentence of death.

And here it was that Jesus beheld once again the faces of his mother, and Mary of Magdala ; for on learning what was to be his fate, the disciples had hastened to apprise his loving followers. Moreover, since it was the custom for the ladies of Jerusalem to bring wine to assuage the thirst and

agonies of such unfortunates as were led to execution, they were permitted to enter the enclosure, and thus exchange a last few words with the condemned. And so, together with John, they had come; torn between the one agony of the spectacle of Jesus on the cross, and the other of being separated from him at the hour of his suffering; so that they wept floods of uncontrollable tears. But on seeing this, Jesus smiled on them with an infinite compassion, and said: Do not weep for me, for I shall not suffer. And then as they shrank from the execrations and insults and lewd jokes hurled at their beloved Master by the rabble outside the enclosure, he said to them: Pay no heed, and forgive them, for they are but ignorant, and know not what they do.

So then, in a little while, all was ready, and the soldiers took him—the sublime Master, who had rescued the sorrowing from sickness and despair, and lighted the Light which is never to be quenched in the hearts of countless children of men—and stripping him of his garment, fastened him to the cross by driving nails into his two hands, binding his feet to a small rest which sustained them at the lower extremity, without which the weight of his body would have torn the flesh from his outstretched palms. But as those women heard the sound of the nails being driven in, they fell on each other's breasts, in, as it were, an ecstasy of horror and compassion, which well-nigh broke their hearts. And only when presently the calm reassuring voice of Jesus sounded in their ears through their sobs,

saying again: Do not weep, for in truth I do not suffer; look upon me and see for yourselves—did they summon courage to lift up their heads.

And then as they looked, they saw, it is true, the blood dripping from his pierced hands; but his face was utterly unchanged, and his eyes filled, not with the moisture of pain, but rather the moist dulcitude of compassion for the sufferings of those who suffered because of him. And he said very gently: Alas, had ye but trusted me a little more, ye would have saved yourselves these tears, which gladly I would spare you, if only I could. And yet, how else can I show you whether I need or merit them, save by asking you to look on my face, which surely speaks for itself? And now, if ye will but recall all I have told you, your unnecessary commiseration must surely die away.

And in the meanwhile the two thieves were being nailed to their crosses, though their sharp cries of pain were drowned by the noise of the crowd, shouting, not at them, but at Jesus: Hey thou, if thou be the Son of God, come off thy cross! as also other abusive and empty jests, which made about as much impression on him as the barking of a few dogs far away; though they lacerated the hearts of those women almost more than they could endure. But as time went on, that rabble gradually wearied of its coarse and cruel entertainment, and seeing the excitement was now over, it slowly diminished, till at last nothing of it was left at all. Then said Jesus smiling: Even the most stormy amusements come to an end at last; for the greater

portion of humanity are as children who have never grown up, and play one game after another, tiring of them all at length, and never realising they were but games all the time. And as he spoke, one of the thieves that were crucified on each side, groaned with pain, so that Jesus said to his mother: Give that unfortunate some of thy refreshing drink. But Mary said: Dear son, I brought it for thee and there is scarce enough. Then said Jesus: He needs it more than I, therefore do as I ask. So then with a sign Mary took a sponge, which she had brought, and pouring some wine upon it, lifted it on the end of a stick to the thief, who sucked at it gratefully. And he said, very feebly when he had drained it dry: Aye, how these nails tear my flesh. Why did I bring myself to this pass, and who knows what is going to happen to me when I am dead? And yet I only stole from the rich; and what harm did I do, seeing they had more than enough and I had nothing? And he turned his head very wearily towards Jesus, and said: Comrade, what didst *thou* do? But Mary hastily interposed, and said: My son was a preacher and committed no crime; his name is Jesus. Then said that thief: What! the Prophet of Nazareth? And Mary answered with a little touch of pride: Yes, the very same; didst thou not hear how the crowd reviled him because he had preached the truth? And the thief said: I heard, and yet somehow, I heard it not; for who hears anything when he knows that nails will be hammered into his hands? And he groaned aloud. Then the other thief, hearing what

had been said, exclaimed contemptuously: If thou be a great prophet, save thyself and save us as well. But the first thief retorted: Wretched fellow, who art thou to talk thus, and revile him who is not like unto us; hold thy peace lest worse befall thee. And he turned to Jesus, paying no heed to the curses he had evoked from the other in reply. And then he said anxiously: O Prophet, tell me, will my soul be tortured because of my sins when I die? And thou, who, because thou wast good, wilt go to a better place, wilt thou remember me, just for the sake of the time when we were fellow-sufferers? And Jesus looked at him with an unspeakable love, and said: My brother, even this very night I will come to thee in Paradise (*a*).

And as he said this, those women once more began to weep uncontrollably, for their hearts were so deeply touched that they almost broke. Then seeing this, Jesus said to John, who had sat near the foot of the cross all the time with his face buried in his hands; Take them home, for truly they have suffered enough; besides which, behold the clouds are gathering and a storm is near at hand, and it is not well for them to be out here any longer. Moreover, for me they can do nothing more, seeing I will now abandon the body and commune with the All-Father So then John replied sadly: Master, I will do as thou dost ask, though I am loth to go; and yet perhaps it is best so, and, as thou sayest, the clouds gather and it is not well for women to be out here in a storm. Then said

(*a*) *i.e.* the Astral Plane or Kamaloka.

Jesus to his mother: John will be as thy son now, and will take care of thee: do thou on thy part look upon him as such. And now farewell, and my blessings go with thee. And then those three women, having stooped down and kissed, in their turn, his feet, over which their tears fell in abundance, turned and walked away with bowed heads, while John walked silently at their side. But Jesus, after they had receded from sight, murmured softly: Father, into Thy hands I commend these my poor brothers. And then he abandoned his body, while his head fell forward on to his breast, as if he were dead (*a*).

And meanwhile the soldiers had been amusing themselves by throwing dice, and gambling and drinking, utterly oblivious of Jesus and the two thieves; but as one of their company happened to turn round, he saw how Jesus' head had fallen on his breast. And he said: Strange! for surely this man has died very quickly, seeing it takes as a rule some days! And he got up and went to look at Jesus; but there was no sign of life (*b*), although the thieves on their part, were still alive (*c*).

And then, of a sudden, a terrible storm burst over Jerusalem, which was not only rendered dark by reason of the dense black clouds, but there was also an eclipse of the sun, so that the whole country

(*a*) Jesus entered into Samadhi, as it is called—viz. superconscious trance. See Introduction.

(*b*) In Samadhi the breathing is absolutely imperceptible and the body shows every sign of apparently recent death. (*c*) The incident of the spear has been omitted because it does not "ring true" seeing that blood does not flow from a corpse.

was steeped in a darkness as if it were night. And as those superstitious soldiers heard the awful rolling and crashing of the thunder, and were almost blinded by the lightnings, which lit up the uncanny and awe-inspiring darkness, they were alarmed to the extent of horripilation, thinking the wrath of God had descended upon the whole land. And they said among themselves in their fright: Who knows, but that God is not avenging Himself on Jerusalem for the death of one of His servants; for was this Jesus not a holy man? And they lay on the ground, and covered their faces, and quaked and shivered; hiding the lightning from their eyes. And for long hours that terrible storm raged, as if it would never come to an end, and the whole earth groaned, as it were, in a terrible travail: but the soul of Jesus was far away in the realms of ineffable Peace.

5

Now the following day, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate, asking of him that he should allow the body of Jesus to be placed in their hands, so that they might lay it in a tomb, and not suffer it to be buried in the place of infamy, as was the custom in the case of malefactors. For it must be known that Joseph had recently built a sepulchre in the vicinity of his house, wherein to lay his own bones after death. And Pilate said, in answer to their request: Seeing I have failed to save your friend from his unmerited fate, I will not only grant

this favour, but indeed gladly, when the time comes for him to be taken down from the cross. And yet, after all, I am hardly granting a favour, since in accordance with Roman law, the bodies of those who are executed may be delivered to such who claim them ; though no doubt a word from me will facilitate matters, since the enemies of Jesus, if they got the opportunity, might strive to withstand the law, by reason of the particular circumstances of the case. Then said Joseph : We are much in thy debt for thy words, and would take advantage of them without delay ; for this evening begins the Sabbath, and not only that, but the Feast of the Passover, and as thou knowest—since the Jewish law demands that no evil spectacle should profane that holy day—both Jesus and the two thieves will be removed, and if not already dead, will be killed. But we have ascertained that Jesus has already given up the ghost, so that we would take his body and embalm it, and lay it in the sepulchre as soon as possible, if thou wilt but give the order to the guard. Then said Pilate : What ! is he already dead ; for surely he has died very speedily, and I would have thought he would have lived for many days, seeing he was so strong of body. And Joseph answered : Nevertheless it is as I said.

So then Pilate accordingly gave the orders whereby the soldiers were instructed to deliver the body of Jesus to Joseph and Nicodemus, who in company with Mary his mother and John and Peter were to proceed to Golgotha, that from thence the body might be conveyed to the tomb which Joseph

had built. But Pilate in his order made it plain that the centurion must be assured that all life was extinct before surrendering the body, for cases had been known where malefactors had recovered from the effects of crucifixion, and their bodies been handed over to friends or relatives on the supposition they were dead, when in truth they were still alive. And although the Governor Pilate was, as has been related, no enemy to Jesus, yet he feared the terrible disturbance that must accrue if such a thing came to pass in this particular case.

And so it finally came about that the Master was taken down from the cross; for although the soldiers must needs kill the two thieves, they were fully persuaded that Jesus had died long since; so that, without protestation, they let him be carried by his loving disciples to Joseph's sepulchre, wherein he was laid, and where his body was washed and his wounds anointed with balsam by Mary Magdala and Mary the sister of Lazarus, who had been summoned from Bethany.

Now this sepulchre consisted of a small chamber, dug out of the side of a sloping rock, at the bottom of which the resting place for the body was indicated by a couch let into the wall, and surmounted by an arch; while the door, as it were, to the sepulchre itself, consisted of a heavy stone which was rolled to the opening. And so here, in this strange but cool retreat, Jesus, in accordance with his own instructions, was suffered to remain over the Sabbath day, wrapped in a white cool sheet, with his wounds now dressed, and his

body anointed with sweet perfumes, ready for the time when the soul should return to its fleshly tabernacle, and he should awaken from his super-sleep.

But in the meantime, Joseph and Mary of Magdala, and Mary the sister of Lazarus, as also Jesus' mother, awaited with impatience the end of the Sabbath; for it had been arranged that in the dead of that night, Jesus, having left the tomb, should come to Joseph's house, where he should remain for two days, until the pilgrims returning from the feast of the Passover to their various homes should no longer throng the roads; for then, under cover of darkness, he was to proceed to Galilee, where according to his instructions, certain of his disciples had gone in advance. And this had been pre-arranged by reason of the fact that a guard had been placed to watch the tomb, in case any attempt might be made on the part of body-snatchers to enter it. But it had been further arranged, that at the end of the Sabbath, the watch should likewise come to an end, and then Peter and Joseph and John were, as soon as the darkness rendered them safe from observation, to roll away the stone at the door of the tomb, and after Jesus had come forth from that sepulchral retreat, to roll it back again into its place, so that no-one should suspect what had occurred.

And yet in spite of Jesus' promise to awaken from his long trance, those women spent the weary hours of that Sabbath in a turmoil of doubts and apprehensions, wondering without cessation whether,

after all, Jesus could really emerge from so protracted a sleep, after the terrible ordeal of the cross. And so, when the religious obligations of that paschal sabbath were at an end, they all sat in Joseph's house, in almost an agony of expectancy, which increased every minute as the time for action drew near. But to encourage, as it were, their own hearts, they recalled to one another all the mighty deeds that Jesus had done. For his mother said: If my son could awaken Lazarus from four days' swoon or more, surely he can awaken himself. But then Mary of Magdala, giving vent to her anxiety replied: Yes, yes, but then Lazarus had not suffered the agony of the cross; and who knows whether he could have survived if he had? To which John protested quickly, saying: Away with these doubts; for to think even for a moment that the Master will not return, is utterly unendurable. But Joseph said sagely: What will be, will be; therefore let us wait in patience, for soon we shall all know. And after this manner, they talked one to the other, as the remaining hours slowly went by.

And then at last, the time for action came; for the daylight having resolved itself into twilight, and the twilight into a darkness not even tempered by the faintest glimmer of a slender moon, there was nothing to frustrate the secrecy of the mission on which Joseph and John and Peter now set forth. For emerging from Joseph's house in the dead of night, when not a soul was astir in the vicinity, they made their way to the sepulchre, in which Jesus was laid, taking with them but one dimly-

burning and shaded lantern, and nothing else. And so, they groped their way along in the darkness, hardly daring to speak, until they reached the tomb ; which, after a great effort, they entered with a trepidation they were at great pains to conceal ; torn between longing and doubt, and hope, combined with something of fear ; for not a sound greeted their ears from the depths of that chilly and uncanny cave, which was as silent as a cavern in the very bowels of the earth. Then while Peter lifted his lantern, so that its dim rays should fall on Jesus' face—which it showed pale and unutterably serene as if in death—John faltered in a voice that shook with emotion and anxiety : Master, awake, thy disciples have come. And he took Jesus by the arm to arouse him, saying again, but this time louder : Master, Master awake ! And then for a moment they all waited, poised on the very summit, as it were, of suspense ; for Jesus showed as yet no sign whatever of life. Then Peter cried imploringly : Master, for the Love of God awake, thy disciples are here. And he likewise took the arm of that seemingly lifeless body and gripped it hard ; while all three leant over and peered into Jesus' face, looking as if their indescribable suspense would almost break their very hearts.

And at length, in the body of that tranquil slumberer there arose a faint sigh ; and instantly they all looked at each other scarcely daring to credit their own senses, yet longing to do so as they had never longed before ; as with heads on one side, they listened, holding their breath in the

extremity of their suspense. And finally, a slight shiver passed over Jesus' body, followed by the faint sound of breathing, which grew more audible and perceptible every moment; so that finally those watchers exclaimed in an ecstasy of relief: Ha, he lives without the shadow of a doubt. And just as they spoke, Jesus slowly opened his eyes.

And then John threw himself on his bosom and cried: Master, Master, hast thou really returned to us?—for we nearly died in our agony of suspense. And as he spoke, Peter, as he knelt on the ground, seized Jesus' hand and kissed it repeatedly, while the calmer Joseph was content to look on silently, and express his love and joy by the light in his eyes. Then said Jesus, very kindly, though his words in themselves were a reproach: Had ye but acquired the perfection of faith, ye had saved yourselves much. And so saying, aided by the disciples, he arose from the stone couch on which he had lain for so long. But those disciples although they were in a transport of joy, yet nevertheless their apprehension, lest they should be detected, prompted them to make no more demonstrations until under the safe cover of Joseph's house. So that they said hastily: Come, let us get hence, since it is not safe to linger here; for who knows but what someone may pass by, and then we are utterly undone. But Jesus smiled and said calmly: Have no fears, no-one will pass by. But what is more pressing is that Mary and my mother await me in the house. So then Joseph threw over Jesus a dark garment which he had brought; and after they had all

emerged from the tomb, they rolled back the stone, so that that sepulchre looked as if it had never been disturbed. And having done this, they speedily went on their way, uttering not a word

IX

1

And meanwhile in Joseph's house three women waited, with loudly beating hearts, listening for the sound of footsteps, which seemed utterly to refuse ever to make themselves heard; though many a phantom sound resembling such came and went, as it were, in their own overstrained imaginations, having no reality at all. And then at last, after what seemed to be the hundredth time, one or other of those women had said: Hark, can this be they, the unmistakable sound of the footsteps of one solitary hastening person was heard, coming along the road. And immediately those women looked at one another in the dim light, with alarm and perplexity on their faces, saying What does this mean? And now, surely something terrible has occurred, and one of the brothers has come to break the news. But Mary, Lazarus' sister, instantly arose and quickly went out into the garden to meet the messenger, whoever he might be. And lo! it was Peter, who, unable to wait any longer, had hurried on in advance of his companions in order to break the glad news; so that as soon as he saw Mary, he cried excitedly: Make ready, for the Master comes! But not waiting for another word,

Mary rushed back into the house to tell the others what she had just heard.

And instantly a change came over their faces, like the change in the landscape when suddenly the sun bursts forth from behind a dense cloud after a storm. And they arose up and ran to the door, almost upsetting Peter in the exuberance of their joy; for he had just entered in Mary's wake. And they cried, all talking at once: Where is he? And is he safe and well? And why does he linger so long? Come, let us go out and meet him. But Peter restrained them, saying: Do nothing rash, for the city has ears, and who knows but what wakeful eyes may be looking out into the night? But nevertheless Mary of Magdala was not to be restrained, and hastening out through the gate, she made her way towards the others, coming upon them just as they turned a bend in the road. And then immediately she saw the Master and ran forward and threw herself on his breast, though without uttering a word, whereupon he, after a moment's embrace, very lovingly led her, with his arms still about her, back towards the house.

So then in a very little while Jesus sat once more in the midst of his loved ones, who in their turn embraced him, with hearts rendered for a while inarticulate, as it were, by their sudden access of joy. And yet, if their tongues were paralysed with love, refusing the office of adequately expressing the unutterable relief and gladness which surged in their souls, their actions, on the other hand more than atoned for the deficiency, see-

ing they busied themselves with every conceivable device to administer to Jesus' comfort, as much as to say: Let our administrations express what our tongues utterly refuse to speak. And so they placed before him the daintiest of foods and the most refreshing of drinks, feeding him with their own hands and totally refusing to let him move even a finger, lest his wounds should be the worse for the effort. And all the time, while the others fed him, Mary of Magdala laved his feet with perfumed oils, as she had so often done before; almost thinking herself in a dream; for it seemed incredible that Jesus should be there, actually before her eyes in the flesh, after all she had beheld. And in like manner did the others think; hardly able to realise that he, who had been nailed to a cross, and buried in a tomb as one dead, could once again be amongst them as a living fact and, save for the bandages round his hands, totally unchanged. Moreover, all the time, Jesus, knowing the fulness of their hearts and the inarticulateness of their lips, added, as it were, to his own reality by conversing to them with a gentle gaiety, which seemed veritably to belie the scene of that awful crucifixion, and seemed as much as to say: 'Think ye that one who had suffered so terrible an ordeal, could be, after hardly two days, so light of heart'? So that those administering women came at last to wonder which was the dream; that nightmare of a crucifixion, or this homely and peaceful spectacle of the Master conversing to them so gently and loving-heartedly in Joseph's house.

And then at length, Jesus knowing their thoughts, said with a smile : O my friends ! who are thinking of dreamings and dreams ! Know that all terrestrial life possesses something of the illusory nature of a dream, but the joyful and the beautiful happenings are nearer to Reality than the gloomy and evil and sad, which are as dark shadows having no substance at all, yet by reason of their effect, seeming to be real nevertheless. And so that scene of Golgotha was, as it were, really the dream ; because, by reason of its gloom and evil, it was more of unreality than this little scene of peace and love and joy ; which containing, as it does, some attributes of the eternal, is hence nearer to the realm of the Real. And yet in comparison to that Realm, it also is a dream ; seeing that like a dream it will pass away, although those attributes of peace and love and joy which it contains will remain just as the blue sky remains, though the cloud dissolve. For just as the firmament contains often an admixture of blue sky and cloud, so do the manifold happenings of life contain an admixture of the real and the illusionary. But furthermore, just as he alone who could succeed in soaring above the clouds altogether would perceive the blue sky in its entirety, in like manner only he who rises above the clouds of terrestrial existence can perceive the Absolute Reality and be free.

Then said Joseph : But to that end, Master, is it necessary to die ? And Jesus answered with a smile : Know that there are two kinds of Freedom, the Freedom of the soul that perceives the Reality

while yet in the flesh, and the Freedom of the soul that has shed the flesh (137). And the former is like unto one, who standing above the clouds may ever see the eternal blue sky, yet if he so wills, can also see the clouds which are below him, and on which, as it were, he treads, while the latter becomes one with the blue sky itself, and consequently for him there are no clouds at all.

By now my friends, the hour is late indeed, and although I myself am rested after my long sleep, yet with you who have waited so anxiously, and administered to me so lovingly, it is otherwise. Moreover, to-morrow and the next day are before us; seeing not until two days have passed will I set out to Galilee at night-time, so as not to be seen of men. And he smiled as he added humourously: For who knows but what I might find myself, if discovered, once again on the Cross; but what is worse, also bring terrible punishment on yourselves for having harboured a criminal in your midst. And so now, go you all to rest, for as I said, tomorrow is before us, and shall I not be a prisoner, so to say, in your hands, so that ye will have me the whole day long?

And then although they all protested, and said they would gladly sit and converse with the Master the entire night, yet Jesus was firm; for those three women especially, by reason of all they had experienced, were utterly worn and haggard and ready almost to drop with fatigue.

2

So then all the next day and the one following Jesus sat in an upper chamber, lest any stranger coming to the house should find him; in which case all had been lost. But Martha and Lazarus and Nicodemus were permitted to visit him and bid him farewell, ere he set out on his journey; following in the wake of his other closer disciples, who had been instructed to meet him in a secret place in Galilee; seeing it was deemed inexpedient that he should journey in their company. For everything was to be contrived—nay, had been—so as to preserve the strictest secrecy, and Joseph had even dispatched all his servants to his other house in Arimathea, so that Jesus might remain in his present abode without fear of detection. Moreover, it had also been arranged where Jesus was to break his journey on the way; the disciples having arranged this as they preceded him; a matter not very difficult, seeing he had many friends. But this was to be his last journey, for from now onward Jesus elected to withdraw from the world of men altogether, and retire to a place in the hills of Lebanon, to live as a hermit, though in the vicinity of a secret Brotherhood. Nay, as he told his disciples: My work, although it be in one sense over, yet in another it only begins, for I have but gathered my forces together in the field, so to say, and now from the quietude of that lofty place,

I must direct them and watch over them, uninterrupted by the turmoils of the world (*a*).

And so it came about that on the second day, when night had fallen once more, and the city was silent and the streets deserted, Jesus bade Joseph and Martha and Nicodemus a loving farewell, and set out alone towards Galilee. But as to Peter and John and Mary of Magdala, and Lazarus and Mary his sister, they were to follow after him in a little while, and meet him in the secret place, where so often he had instructed his disciples hitherto. For seeing that Jesus' Mother was returning to Cana, those other two women had said: We will go with thee, that we may be near the Master until the last.

So then, all that night, Jesus journeyed in solitude along the dark roads, with but the stars to illumine his way. But as the very first dim rays of dawn began to banish the myriad eyes from the heavens, he neared a particular place, where he was to remain n the house of a disciple, until the darkness once again enabled him to continue his journey.

And it so happened that just as he arrived within sight of the village, he overtook two men, who turned out to be followers of his, and who were walking along the road, with sad faces, conversing the while in sorrowful tones. So that because of

(*a*) It must be remembered that space is no obstacle to an Adept, who retires from the world, not, as people suppose, in order that He may lead a selfish (?) contemplative life, ignoring the needs of humanity, but that His work in the subtler yet much more "powerful" planes of Nature, may help humanity the more.

this, when he came alongside of them, he said cheerily: My friends, were it discourteous to ask of what it is ye speak together so earnestly, and why ye are so sad of mien? And then those men looked round with a start, for that voice seemed familiar to them, though so engrossed were they with their thoughts of Jesus' death, that to associate it with him never entered their minds. And they said in effect: Stranger, if so thou art (for the light is yet too dim for us to see thy countenance), know that we mourn the death of one we loved, and one who came to an untimely end through the treachery of an evil man. And yet, perhaps, thou dost know of whom we speak, for it is of Jesus, the prophet who was crucified; and to our minds without just cause; though perhaps thou dost think otherwise if thou comest from Jerusalem. Then said Jesus: In truth, I know him well. But tell me, were ye his disciples, and if so, have ye no fears to talk of him so openly and avow yourselves his friends, lest ye be persecuted for admitting fellowship with a criminal? And one of them answered with some warmth: Nay, it were an honour to be persecuted for the sake of such a man, who merited worship as a God rather than death. And yet in any case, who would persecute us here in Samaria? And Jesus said: How did thy friend come to be betrayed? Then said one of the men, whose name was Cleophas: It would seem he was betrayed by one of his own disciples, but it is difficult to know the reason. And now we shall never know it, for we have heard that this traitor hanged himself when he heard his Master was crucified. And Jesus answered sadly: Alas, poor

Judas, quickly did the result of his error fall upon him; and yet now he has added to its weight by destroying his own body in despair. Then exclaimed the other, whose name was Zachus: What! thou dost lament over that culprit of a traitor, who not only deserves no commiseration, but rather every whit the fate that befel him, and a terrible punishment in the next world as well. But Jesus answered very gently: It is written, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; therefore shouldst thou pity him whatever he does, and the more so, if he does that which is evil in the sight of the Divine.

And as he spoke, those too men, arrested by the gentleness of his voice, started, and looked at him, in the increasing light of dawn. And as they looked, they started again, with a sensation which was half fear and half astonishment, for although their eyes gazed upon the familiar figure of Jesus, yet their minds utterly refused to credit what they beheld. And as they looked upon him spell-bound, Jesus laughed and said: Come, my friends, I am not a spirit, but a living fact, therefore be neither surprised nor alarmed; for know that although I was crucified and laid in the tomb, yet I rose, as it were, again. And now I make my way to a place far from the haunts of men, lest by attempting to arrest and crucify me again, they bring more evil on themselves, in the form of a terrible retribution which I were powerless to avert. And so ere I revealed myself to you, I probed your hearts, which I found not wanting in loyalty; for it were not well that through what ye might

tell to others, people should come to know I live, which would but awaken their hatred anew, and so harm their own souls without harming me at all. And thus, having probed your hearts, I know full well that ye will be discreet, sealing, so to say, your lips with the seal of silence; for although, as I said, my enemies can no longer harm me (for I go to a place where no-one may follow), yet by your indiscretion ye would be, as it were, the mothers of revenge in the hearts of others.

And so then as Jesus spoke, those two men looked at him all the time as if transfixed by a spell, by reason of their overwhelming astonishment, which seemed now greater with every word he said. So that at last Cleophas exclaimed: But Master, we hardly dare to credit our senses; for although thou dost seem, without a doubt, to be flesh and blood, yet for all we know thou mightest be a spectre, or perhaps even we dream. Then said Jesus, laughing: Look at my hands, which bear the scars of the nails, and which surely are a testimony to my reality in the flesh. And as they looked, shrinking back a little at the sight, they said: In truth it must be as thou sayest; and yet as we look on thy wounds we are torn between compassion for all thou hast suffered, and delight at seeing thee again, as also remorse for having, even for an instant, doubted thy words. But to see one we thought to be dead once more alive is an experience utterly unprecedented in our existence, so may we be forgiven for what we could not help. And Jesus said, smiling lovingly: My friends, ye were already

forgiven, so to say, even before there was anything to forgive. And now this is my destination for to-day—for here is the house of my disciple where I abide until night, that under cover of darkness I may once more continue my journey. And Zachus said imploringly: O Master, may we not accompany thee, for to have found thee and then lose thee again all in an instant, were a fate cruel indeed, and hardly to be endured? And Jesus answered with a smile: For four hours I must lay me down to rest, but ye may visit me at noon, and remain with me until the evening; and glad indeed shall I be to have your companionship ere I set out once again.

. .

3

So then at last, after again breaking his journey on the way, Jesus one morning very early came to the cave in the vicinity of the Lake of Galilee, where he was to meet his disciples in secret. And after having slept for a while in that cool retreat, he came and stood in the mouth of the cave to watch for their arrival up the pathless slope; for the cave was high up in the hills, from which the blue Galilean Lake might be seen far away below. And then as the appointed hour drew near, he could see a little body of men in groups of twos and threes slowly ascending the patches of green pasture, to appear and disappear, as they entered and emerged from the clumps of trees with which the hillside was adorned. But presently the foremost group arrived

at the edge of the sward which stretched in front of the cave, and seeing Jesus, those men hastened their steps and approached him with outstretched arms, and delight shining on their faces ; for this was their first meeting after his crucifixion, seeing, as already said, he had instructed them that they should go in advance of him to Galilee. But although James and Levi—for such were the names of the first to reach the cave—rushed forward to embrace their Master, Thomas, who was also of their company, held back, for he doubted the possibility that Jesus could go through so terrible an ordeal and yet live. Moreover, he had heard the news that Jesus was actually dead, and had been buried in a tomb, by reason of which his doubts had become all but a certainty, so that he had even endeavoured mournfully to persuade his fellow-disciples with the oratory of his scepticism, though to no avail. Nevertheless, he had come with them to the cave, not because he expected to see Jesus in the flesh, but because he wanted to be present at the time of their awakening as he thought, to the sorrowful truth. And so by reason of all this, it came about that he held back, watching with wonderment and awe, as those two other disciples embraced their Master ; utterly unable to realise that Jesus was not a phantom, but a being of flesh and blood.

And so at last Jesus said, with a smile of amusement, flavoured with a kindly reproach : Thomas, my friend, why dost thou hold back, art thou not pleased to see thy teacher again ? And Thomas answered : Master ! I cannot credit my senses, for

surely thou art a phantom arisen from the dead? And Jesus said gently: O Thomas, thou wast ever of a sceptical turn of mind, and difficult to convince of many things, and thou hast certainly not altered of a sudden, as I can see. And yet, what could be more flesh and blood than I am, and if beholding me so near (as thou dost) cannot convince thee, what indeed can? Then said Thomas: If I were to behold the scars from the nails on thy palms, then I would be convinced. And immediately Jesus held out his hands, with a smile, and replied: Look then and be assured. And then when Thomas had become convinced by reason of what he beheld, a little ashamed indeed (for the other two disciples could not repress a smile of triumph which he did not fail to perceive), he said: Master, now I know, and I am reproved for my unbelief, and remorseful as well; seeing all the while I have endeavoured to persuade my fellow disciples they would see thee no more; though truth to tell they would not listen to me, and rightly so, for they were in the right and I in the wrong. Then said Jesus, kindly reproachful: Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed, and yet fortunate are they that have not seen but believe nevertheless; for to see with the understanding is better than to behold with the eyes. And was not all my teaching to this end, that thou shouldst understand among other things the laws by which man is enabled to abandon his body and return to it at will? And did I not tell thee I would not die, but by employing the forces consistent with those laws, overcome death, that

my teachings should be upheld by example, so that others should be encouraged to learn to follow, so to say, in my footsteps. And yet in spite of all this, thou art still dependent on the evidence of thy senses, which far from being a criterion of truth, are often utterly at fault, and so hardly to be relied on at all. For only by right understanding can truth be discerned—just as he who perceives with his mind that three and four make seven requires not to take seven pebbles in his hand to convince him of so simple a fact. And so, my friend, in future be not faithless but believing instead; wasting not words on the oratory of nescience, and thus resembling a blind man who tries to convince those more fortunate ones who can see, that their faculty is but folly and imagination, having no substance at all. So saying, Jesus embraced Thomas, and patted him on the shoulder, adding playfully: O foolish brother, when wilt thou learn wisdom and truth?

But by this time, the other disciples had arrived at the cave; and deep indeed was their joy at beholding the Master again; for although it was but a few days since they had parted from him in Jerusalem, yet by reason of all that had passed in the interim, it seemed almost as if years had intervened instead. And they brought him bread and fruits, and gifts of a like nature, betokening their devotion, seeing that Jesus had apprised them of his intention to remain in this retreat for some days ere he set out for the hills of Lebanon; so that it was necessary they should administer to

his needs, slight though they were. For he had still to instruct them in many things ere he could trust them to carry on his work in the world; leaving them to go forth to spread the Way of Attainment to those who were ready to receive it. And so, the next few days he taught them there on that secluded hillside in Galilee, whereunto Mary of Magdala, and Lazarus and Mary his sister had now come also; so that all were joined together once more.

And here it was he gave them the message and the golden precepts they were to deliver to the world of men. For he said: My brothers and sisters! Unto mankind ye shall say: 'Truth, one and absolute, is in God alone, for no man, nor body of men, knows that which God alone knows who is the All in All. But to men is Truth revealed according to their capacity to understand and to receive (138). For the one Truth has many sides, and one person sees one side, while another sees another side, and some people see more than others according as they prepare themselves to receive; nay, when the Aspirant is ready, the Teacher is always forthcoming, in that to him who knocks, the door is always opened. And so I say, knock persistently and ever seek more light, never resting until ye find it, for by so doing, ye shall obtain in abundance. For God gives you all Truth for the liberation and perfection of the soul; and yet it is like a ladder with many steps; in that what seems as the truth to-day ye will abandon for a still higher truth to-morrow. Nevertheless, be not

deterred by this, but ever press onward to perfection. But to this end ye must keep the holy Law of Love, willing yourselves to love all creatures by making your minds one with Love itself ; seeing that Love is not a matter of fortuitous circumstances but a matter of will. And in accordance with that Law of Love ye shall not take away the life of any creature for your pleasure or profit, nor yet torment it in any way. Nor shall ye gather riches or lands to yourselves in such a manner that ye deprive others of the necessities of life. Nor again shall ye make impure marriages, where affection and health are absent, so corrupting yourselves and others in the sight of God (139). Nor yet again shall ye eat impure food nor drink fiery drinks, which bring disorder to your bodies and senses, fanning the flames of desire unhallowed by love. For to do any of these things is to place an obstacle in the Pathway of Liberation and to create debts which sooner or later must be paid off by pain. But whoever keeps these holy laws which I have disclosed, shall save their souls, however diversely they may regard the Truth ; for as I have said over and over again, it is the spirit and not the letter of the Law that matters ; seeing that the spirit is born of love, but adherence to the letter is born of shortsightedness and folly and smallness of heart. And so to you, my beloved disciples, I say : Go into the world and preach these Golden Precepts to mankind, that they may prepare themselves for the higher things I have given to you. Feed, so to say, my flock, and show them the way to the celestial

fold; but to those who are ready—yet only to those—may ye reveal the deeper mysteries I have entrusted to you, that those mysteries never die out, but remain for ever in the world for the sa vation of mankind.

4

But ere long, the day of departure came about, when Jesus was to make his last journey, and set out for the hills of Lebanon, accompanied by such of his disciples as refused to leave him until he should bid them turn back. For although he had said to them: Why make so long a journey to bid me farewell, as if I was to separate myself from you all, when in reality there is no separation, and ye will see me again?—yet they had protested, imploring him that they might go as far as the Lebanon Hills, so only to be with him to the very last. And so to some he had given in, but those who were weak of body he persuaded to remain behind, promising to comfort them by appearing to them in his subtler body very soon. And one of these was his mother, whom he was loth to see toiling that long way, now that she was no more young and her years were beginning to tell on her, especially after all she had experienced of late.

And thus it came about that to her he bade farewell there, one evening in that cave on the hillside. And then, as he looked at her with unutterable affection, he said: Let us not indulge in the wasted sadness of saying good-bye, for I am with thee. and

thou with me until the end of the world ; as I have been with thee times without number in other lives. And she answered sorrowfully and brokenly, with tears in her eyes : My son, I know what thou sayest is true, and I ought to be comforted ; and yet, with thy departure, somehow all the light seems to go out of my life, for thou wast my pride and my joy and my all, and on thee I thought night and day, even dreaming of thee, as if sleep itself could not blot out thine image from my heart. And he said with an ineffable compassion : Mother, never would I go and leave thee without comfort ; for know that that image shall remain and be nearer to thee than thou hast ever known it before. So saying, he placed his hands on her shoulders and for a moment gazed intently into her eyes. And then, wonderful to say, she felt uplifted, as it were, from the earth, and in a realm of indescribable Bliss ; and her soul beheld for the fraction of a moment Jesus in the glory of his real Self, enveloping her with a radiance utterly beyond the power of words to pourtray ; and at the same time, she felt herself utterly one with him and knew herself to be so, for ever and ever more. And as the result of that vision, when she came back, as it were, to the earth, every particle of sadness had vanished from her heart as if it had never been at all, and she heard the voice of Jesus saying cheerily : Wouldst thou mourn over the separation from an illusion, which is this body ; when thou canst have the reality ? And so, my mother, be at peace, for truly my peace I bestow upon you ;

the peace which is not of this fleeting world, but of the Eternal, and which nothing can take away. And then he kissed her very tenderly and added: Now go. And because her heart was too full of a calm and love and joy she had never experienced in her life before, she went out and departed without a word.

And then, when night had fallen, and the moon had arisen to light them on their way, Jesus and Peter and John, together with one or two others, including Mary of Magdala and Lazarus and Mary his sister, set out on their journey. But as soon as they left Galilee behind them and were well on their way towards Damascus, they abolished the procedure of travelling by night, seeing that the danger of detection was practically over, and in any case Jesus was beyond the reach of harm; for no-one could arrest him here, far away from the sway of the Jews and Pharisees, who still deemed him to be resting lifeless within the tomb. And yet, nevertheless, he was seen by one or two wayfarers who happened to be on the road from Damascus to Galilee, and who had many months previously heard him preach by the lakeside; but not having been in Jerusalem since his arrest and crucifixion, and so having heard nothing of that mighty drama, thought no more of the matter. But later on, when the disciples, unable to hold their peace, let it be known that their Master had—as they expressed it—risen from the dead, those wayfarers did not fail to recall what they had seen; and so story got added to story, each one holding a germ of truth,

and yet all the time being very wide of the actual truth itself.

But meanwhile, the little company by slow degrees made towards the hills of Lebanon, where the parting of the ways was to be between Jesus and themselves; so that, as their destination came nearer, their hearts grew sadder, and with a sadness that even the benign presence of the Master failed to dispel. But although the others were merely silent and dejected, Peter on his part was, so to say, utterly out of temper with the world; taking no pains whatever to conceal his feelings and venting his irritability on objects which merited it not at all. For it so happened that some hours after the company had left Damascus, and they were plodding along a very dusty road, Peter became thirsty, so that he said gloomily to one of his companions: O, that I might only moisten the intolerable dryness of my mouth with a juicy fruit; but alas, on this interminable road, there is nothing but an endless monotony of trees, bearing not a single edible thing of any sort.

And just as he spoke, they chanced to pass an old wall, on which a fig tree spread forth its branches, but seeing the time of the year was Spring, there were only leaves upon it and no fruit. And so in his irritability, Peter struck that tree with his staff, and cried: Out upon this cursed thing, which exists but to tantalize me and remind me of the fruit which it does not possess; and now, may it become barren for evermore! But just at that moment, Jesus,

who was a little way in advance, happened to look round, and when he heard what Peter was saying, for one brief moment he laughed as one laughs at an obstreperous child. And then suddenly, his face became very grave; and he said reproachfully: O Peter! when wilt thou learn to curb the impulsiveness of thy nature, and acquire a measure of self-control, the lack of which stands sadly in thy way to attainment and reception of the highest initiations? For why indeed shouldst thou curse that which God has not cursed, and which merits not thy malediction at all (*a*), seeing it is following the laws of its own kind. Nay, reflect on the corn in the field, which, growing according to its nature puts forth first the green shoot, then the stalk and then the ear; and yet wouldst thou be angry, if chancing to pass by at the time of the tender shoot, thou didst not find the corn in the ear? And if not, then why curse this blameless fig tree, which though covered with fresh and beautiful green leaves, bears as yet no fruit? (140).

And then Peter looked crestfallen and remorseful and ashamed, as he said: Alas, Master, I act first, and then think afterwards, when it is too late; being overcome with an agony of remorse and sorrow and regret, not only because of the folly of my deeds but because of my love for thee. And Jesus

(*a*) Says the Commentator to *The Gospel of the Holy Twelve*: 'Long has Jesus suffered reproach for this curse so falsely attributed to him in place of the impulsive Peter, who uttered it, and with whose character it was in fully harmony! Moreover no "perfect man" loses his temper and indulges in such puerilities, which are entirely inconsistent with true Emancipation.

answered: Know that remorse is also a folly, enveloping the heart in gloom, and causing the mind to dwell on evil instead of good, thereby fostering and nurturing the very thing it ought to starve out instead. For although thou dost say thou actest first and thinkest afterwards, yet thou art in error, for thought is ever the mother of action, and he whose mind is filled with right thoughts can never give place to wrong impulses, which, in spite of what thou hast said, are the outcome of wrong thoughts nevertheless. And so to thee I say: Fill thy mind with calm and joyful determination and not with barren remorse; and above all, fill it with Love and gladness, that there be no room therein for anger and revenge and hatred of any sort; for just as water falls off the oily feathers of the swan, so do all evil attributes fall away from the mind that is filled with Love.

5

And at last, after many days, Jesus and his little band of disciples found themselves below the snow-capped mountains of Lebanon, and not far from the spot where he intended to bid them farewell; with two exceptions however; for Mary of Magdala and John the beloved (141) were to go with him, wherever he might lead the way. But it was arranged that later on John should return to the world and be a teacher among men, helping to spread the great mysteries to the elect, though Mary on her part had but one aspiration, namely

to abandon the world of men for ever and remain with her Master to the end of his life. And because of the absolute purity of her heart, and the very high stage to which she had attained, Jesus suffered it to be as she desired; though, lest she should ever regret her decision, he sought to dissuade her again and again (142).

And so it came about, on a day when the spring sun shed its radiance over a mountainous landscape of indescribable grandeur, shining from a sky in which large white clouds floated, settling from time to time over the highest peaks, that Jesus said to his disciples: The time has come for the parting of our ways, for I must now ascend this mountain which stands before us, and it were not well for you to come any further, seeing ye have such a long way to go back home. But Lazarus said: O, Master let us ascend with thee just a little way, that we may be with thee a little longer; besides which, the prospect were grand indeed from yonder height, which must command a view of the Mediterranean Sea, and look down on a veritable amphitheatre of mountains, with their ravines and cedar groves and masses of forests beautiful to behold. Moreover, the day is superb in its youthfulness, and the air invigorating like wine, so that the body is insensible to fatigue. And Jesus smiled as he answered: What say the others? And turning to Lazarus' sister, and putting his hand on her shoulder he said: And especially what sayest thou, for I would not have thee weary thyself, or undertake anything beyond thy strength? But Mary replied fervently:

No task were too strenuous, so only I might be with thee a little longer. And Jesus looked at her with a deep affection, saying: Then be it so, if it is thy wish. And turning to the others he added: And now, do ye see yonder hill, resembling a great stepping stone in front of the mountain which towers above it? To that great grassy ledge ye may come, but no further; for now I must be firm, seeing that if I do not make an end and bid ye return to your homes, who knows whither ye might follow me? And then he added with a suspicion of affectionate playfulness: Moreover, ye have my work to do, which brooks no delay; for truly these are times when love shows itself, not by clinging as it were to the person of the beloved, but by leaving him to do his bidding.

And so it came about that for the next few hours Jesus and his disciples slowly ascended by winding paths, amid pine trees and evergreen oaks, the hill which he had decreed was to be the scene of their farewell. And as they climbed its forested slopes, innumerable springtide birds sang with an exuberance of spirits, strangely contrasting with the sadness in their own hearts; while far away, a swift stony-bedded brook seemed to mock them with its joyous laughter from the valley below. And then at last they came to the top of the ledge, emerging from the forests on to a broad green sward, so that before them was to be seen a great valley, spreading like a vast variegated carpet, tinted with every shade of blue, starting with almost a rich lapis lazuli and fading away into the pale turquoise of the

Mediterranean Sea. But behind them, and on each side, stretched the mountains of Lebanon, with their snow-capped peaks, some of which were covered with clouds, white as the snow they enshrouded with their immaculate veil.

Then said Jesus: Come, my friends, let us sit down for a while and partake of a little food, as we look upon this indescribable loveliness. But seeing their sad faces, he sought to cheer them and distract their thoughts, by relating of the things of the spirit, and predicting many things that would come to pass. And he said, as they partook, though without relish, of the food they had brought: Let not your hearts be sorrowful because of parting, for neither these mountains nor yonder sea can part us who love one another, and truly I will remain with you always, though I seem to leave you now. Moreover, think not of parting at all, but of the work that lies before you, seeing that hardly any joy is so great as the showing of the Great Path. For it is you I have chosen from among men to give you the Law and the Word of Truth, so that I have set you as the light of the world and as a city that can not be hid. And although the time will come when spiritual darkness will cover the earth, and the enemies of truth and enlightenment will pervert my teachings and your teachings, setting up a Kingdom of their own, and putting forth evil and cruel doctrines and proclaiming in my name that which I have never taught, yet be of good cheer, for the time will also come when the truth they have hidden shall

be manifested, and the light of God shall shine anew. Nay, then the darkness will pass away, and the true Kingdom will be established, and it will be in the world but not of it ; for know that the nature of mankind in its relation to Truth is such that it resembles these mountains, seeing that first there is a hill, and then a hollow, and then another hill which is higher than the first, and then again a hollow ; and so on it goes until the highest peak is attained. And exactly thus will it be with the word I have preached ; for at first a little of it will be accepted in its purity, taught by your own selves ; and its receivers shall love it and me, even as ye have loved me, and shall attain, so to say, to the first hill of knowledge. But then the time will come when other men will succeed you, and although some of them will love me, yet being hot-headed and unwise and devoid of patience, they will persecute those who love me not, and so in their supposed loyalty to myself, will sin against my teachings. And then others will come, who being lovers of themselves, will make alliance with the Kings and rulers of the world, seeking earthly powers and riches and domination, and putting to death by fire and sword those who seek the truth and are therefore my true disciples. And in those days I shall be crucified afresh, and put to open shame (143) ; for these culprits in their cruelty and ignorance will profess to do all these things in my name, making me the excuse for their iniquities. And so once again Mankind will stand in the hollow aye, the abyss itself ; but gradually it will see its

folly, and slowly begin to ascend; and this time it will arise a little higher, for more of the truth will spread over the world. And then finally the time will come when a Teacher shall once more emerge from seclusion and visit the haunts of men; and in those days once more we shall all be together by reason of that bond of Love which knows no severance even though ages may pass away.

And as he was speaking, the clouds had gathered, gradually getting lower and lower, so that it seemed as if the little company must soon be enveloped in a white mist. And seeing this, Jesus arose from the grass on which he had been seated, and said with solicitude: My loved ones, ye must now hasten away down the path we have come; for look! the clouds are settling down upon the mountains, coming lower and lower so that ye may lose your way. And some of them replied anxiously: But Master, what of thee, for we are together and nothing can befall us? And Jesus smiled sagely and lovingly as he answered: Trouble not yourselves concerning me, who am quite safe and can come to no harm, for having survived so many things, think ye I shall end by falling down a crevice ere my time is up? And then, so they might not suffer too much by a protracted farewell, he quickly embraced them all, saying to each one words of comfort; and only when he came to Mary, Lazarus' sister, did he linger a little longer, as he kissed her very tenderly, first on the cheek and then on the brow, saying the while: Know that I am with thee always day by day until the end of all time.

But in the meantime, John and Mary of Magdala, having quickly taken leave of the others by reason of their emotion arising from the pathos of the scene, had begun to ascend the slope in advance of Jesus, for he had given them a sign that so they should do. But ere he followed them, he lingered just for a moment to bless his disciples with outstretched arms, as some of them prostrated themselves on the ground. And then finally he began to ascend the hill, but having gone a little way, turned round facing them once again in the attitude of benediction. And as he stood there, those sorrowing disciples saw that stately and benign and majestic figure for the last time in the flesh; for while they gazed with grief-stricken and sinking hearts, the mist like a veiling of white gauze descended lower and lower down the mountain slope, until, enveloping him entirely, he was lost to their view.

FINIS

APPENDIX

(1) See E. Shuré, *Jesus The Last Great Initiate.* How changed the scene nowadays.

(2) This incident is to be found both in *The Aquarian Gospel*, and *The Gospel of The Holy Twelve.*

(3) as Note 2.

(4) See *Aquarian Gospel.*

(5) The Author does not regard this story, adapted from the *Gospel of the Holy Twelve* and *The Aquarian Gospel* as other than allegorical.

(6) The law of Cause and Effect in connection with human action, expressed by the one Sanskrit word Karma, and to be found in most occult works.

(7) Occult works maintain that a spiritual link is the most binding of all, and cannot be severed.

(8) The story of the visit of Mary, Elizabeth and John to the various masters is adapted from *The Aquarian Gospel.* John's visit to the Hermit of Engaddi is also related in Hartmann's *Life of Jehosua.*

(9) See Renan's *Life of Jesus* (Kegan Paul).

(10) See *Aquarian Gospel.*

(11) *Gospel of the Holy Twelve.*

(12) See *Aquarian Gospel.* The dates of Hillel and the Jesus of the Gospels do not correspond. Much of the teaching of Jesus however is that of this Rabbi.

(13) *Ibid.* The *Gospel of the Holy Twelve* states that Jesus' hair was chestnut colour. It is likely however that as he grew older, his hair became darker.

(14) *Gospel of the Holy Twelve.*

(15) *Guru* means spiritual Preceptor, *Chela* disciple, both terms belonging to the Science of Yoga.

(16) Although mention of a journey to India is made in the *Gospel of the Holy Twelve* and also in an *Unknown Life of Christ*, yet the details have been adapted from the *Aquarian Gospel.*

(17) This prodigious eloquence is one of the results of practising Yoga.

(18) See *Aquarian Gospel.*

(19) *Ibid.*

(20) This description is taken from a letter supposed to be written by Pulolius Feutullus, President of Judea.

(21) The Gospels imply that Mary had other sons after Jesus.

(22) See F. Hartmann's *The Life of Jehosua* (*Jesus*), *The Prophet of Nazareth* (Kegan Paul).
(23)*Ibid.*
(24) *Ibid.*
(25) *Ibid.*
(26) *Ibid.*
(27) The Astral Plane in Theosophical terminology.
(28) More correctly *astral body* or *subtle body* : but as the term might not be intelligible to all readers the word ' soul ' is used.
(29) Hartmann's *Life of Jehosua.*
(30) *Ibid.*
(31) ' Above ' is but a *façon de parler,* for the different planes interpenetrate one another and are not above in the sense of layer upon layer. It is, therefore, a question of rarity of ' matter' and rapidity of vibration, not of localities.
(32) *Life of Jehosua.*
(33) *Ibid.*
(34) *Ibid.*
(35) See *Raja Yoga* by Swami Vivekananda (Longmans).
(36) Patanjali's *Aphorism 52* : The Yogi should not feel allured . . . by the overtures of celestial beings, for fear of evil again.
(37) *i.e.* Samadhi in Sanscrit — meaning superconscious trance.
(38) Being perceptible by psychic sight only and not materialized into flesh, he conveyed the words to Jesus' mind.
(39) *Life of Jehosua.*
(40) *Ibid.*
(41) Alas, has not the Church succumbed to this very temptation ?
(42) See Annie Besant, *Esoteric Christianity*, ch. iv, p 132.
(43) See *Aquarian Gospel.*
(44) *Ibid.*
(45) This is an inference taken from Renan's *Life of Jesus.*
(46) Jesus had become a wanderer renouncing all attachments, like the type of wandering Yogi. But there is a deeper meaning underlying this, though the uninitiated take it literally : viz. that the true Yogi is in his heart beyond partiality for any one place or nationality.
(47) See Farrar, *Life of Christ.*
(48) The phrase ' Woman what have I to do with thee ' is hardly relevant, nor is it consistent with the benign character of Jesus. ' Woman ' however, in Aramaic is void of that rudeness which it assumes when translated literally into English.
(49) The true Adept always makes light of his powers, which he regards as quite secondary to Liberation and Cosmic Consciousness. Jesus was no exception as regards this, seeing that he so frequently said, after performing a so-called miracle : ' Tell no man '.
(50) The author is inclined to think Jesus did not perform this ' miracle ' at the marriage at all, but that the whole thing is an

allegory; wine being injurious to the growth of the spiritual faculties. See *The Master*, by Todd-Ferrier.

(51) This habit of looking on, is a feature of Oriental life and is not regarded as a breach of good manners.

(52) This story has been altered and elaborated: the reason being that as it stands in St Luke, the story and the moral do not agree. Jesus said: 'Much shall be forgiven her for she hath loved much', but the creditor did not forgive his debtor because the latter loved him—on the contrary the debtor came to love the creditor *because* that creditor forgave him, which is quite another matter.

(53) See *Gospel of The Holy Twelve.*

(54) As already inferred, although an Adept is utterly immune from any feeling of anger or vexation, yet for the good of his pupils he counterfeits these emotions when expedient.

(55) *The Science of Raja Yoga or Union with the Divine Consciousness.*

(56) Gennesareth.

(57) See *Aquarian Gospel* for this sentence.

(58) *Shri Parananda; an Eastern Exposition of St. Matthew.*

(59) It may be thought that 'simple fishermen' would be quite unable to understand such metaphysics; but this supposition is based on an error. In the times of Jesus the plying of a trade or handicraft was by no means coincident with a lack of education or of intellect.

(60) See J. Estlin Carpenter, *Life in Palestine When Jesus Lived.*

(61) See *Aquarian Gospel.*

(62) See *The Gospel of the Holy Twelve.* It is noteworthy that this passage contains certain words of St Paul.

(63) See *Gospel of the Holy Twelve.*

(64) How true of the present day; seeing that the clergy know so little of Yoga and Occultism, which are the very rationale of religion. What priest or parson can tell us any details of the afterlife as the Yogi, Theosophist, or Spiritist can?

(65) See Shri Parananda, *Eastern Exposition of St John.*

(66) The words of Jesus end here—the verses 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, etc.', being conclusively proved by Westcott to be a commentary. But in any case no 'perfect being' would talk so grandiloquently about himself.

(67) See J. Estlin Carpenter, *Life in Palestine.*

(68) See Shri Parananda, *Eastern Exposition of St. John*, p. 88.

(69) It is a fact that a high Initiate is able to sustain the body in a manner unknown to the run of mankind.

(70) A dignified modesty is a quality that even an Adept shows; indeed he is ever ready to recognise somebody higher and greater than himself.

(71) This is the object of the life of those who belong to the Sannyasi order in India—*i.e.* they beg their food from door to door, not because they are 'tramps', but in order to acquire humility.

(72) *i.e.* Yoga, as explained in the Introduction.

(73) See Annie Besant, *The Outer Court.*

(74) Those who be-little the teaching of Jesus on account of what they call its lack of originality, or again, on that account are inclined to rob the New Testament narratives of *any* historical value whatever, have here their answer. The precepts put before all aspirants to Initiation in the occult mysteries have ever been the same, and will ever be the same. One might as well urge that a man is not a great mathematician or teacher of mathematics because he maintains and teaches the truism that 2 and 2 make 4.

(75) The term Son of Man means really the spirit *in* man, as may be gathered from a scrutiny of other portions in *The New Testament* where the term is used.

(76) *i.e.* given in the sense of spiritual understanding.

(77) *i.e.* things which are not of the spirit, seeing they are transient and illusory.

(78) Control of the elements is one of the many powers of an Adept or Yogi: see *Aphorisms* of Patanjali and *Raja Yoga* by Swami Vivekananda, wherein the rationale of this is set forth.

(79) 'Not *faith* in the fact that "I am the Son of God" as orthodoxy would have it—but faith in the science of God which I teach'. Faith is in fact an absolute prerequisite to progress. How could a man ever hope to attain proficiency in playing the piano for instance, if he did not have faith enough to imagine he ever could play it? As already said, Faith is the mother of Will, and hardly anything is regarded by a teacher of Yoga as of such enormous importance as Faith -and solely for that reason. But the Church being ignorant of Occult Science and all that pertains to it, has degraded Faith to the level of something blind and impotent and pernicious—implying that the greatest virtue is to 'believe' something utterly hostile to reason and logic. It must also be remembered that Jesus had taught these disciples enough for them to know that nothing untoward can happen to a High Initiate (as Jesus was) unless he permits it for some special purpose. Having reached Adeptship he has no more bad Karma to work off. (See Introduction).

(80) When the world has further progressed in the knowledge of the occult sciences, it will come to know that many cases of insanity are a matter of obsession. The methods for dealing with obsession are laid down in what are called the Mantra Shastras—Jesus being a high Initiate knew those methods and used them.

(81) *i.e.* the egg-shaped emanation surrounding the physical body and perceptible to the trained psychic.

(82) By a combination of will and knowledge, Jesus forced this entity to quit the body of the maniac.

(83) *i.e.* thou Master of the *White* Brotherhood! in contradistinction to the *Black* Brotherhood who work for personal power and evil, rather than for the good of the Race.

(84) There is no apology necessary for ridding this story of that exaggeration which transformed it from something perfectly natural into something pernicious and grotesque and far-fetched. What Lord of Love would not only murder a lot of innocent pigs in this way, but at the same time deprive the owner of his property? The incident as related in the Gospels being quite inconsistent with the character and teaching of Jesus, stamps itself as untrue, and also as an instance of the growth of myth.

(85) J. Weymouth (*The New Testament in Modern Speech*) says: 'astounded or beside themselves with joy'. The *R.V.* translates the word *amazed*. This is characteristic of the faulty way the Bible has been translated, and interpreted. The Warden sought for Jesus, believing he could cure his daughter, why then should he be so amazed when the cure was effected? Obviously the correct rendering is rejoiced.

(86) See *The Creed of The Christ* (John Lane).

(87) *Ibid.*

(88) See J. Estlin Carpenter, *Life in Palestine.*

(89) Such powers are called the Siddhis, and are taught by an Adept to such disciples as may be ripe for them; see Introduction.

(90) Jesus had left Capernaum on account of the Pharisees.

(91) A Guru is in touch with his disciples even though they be hundreds of miles away and can direct them what to do in an emergency. Jesus meant on this occasion that he would be a channel for the divine spirit and would as it were, transfer the power to them.

(92) See *The Gospel of the Holy Twelve.*

(93) *Ibid.*

(94) This is not an original saying of Jesus.

(95) Considering the prodigious task a Teacher has before him, He cannot afford to waste His time on those who will not practise.

(96) Or more accurately put—beyond all thinking—This phrase has been erroneously rendered 'the peace of God which passeth all understanding'; though in one sense that is true.

(97) See *Aquarian Gospel.*

(98) Jesus often alluded to himself as the son of man merely to evade the personal pronoun I—a characteristic of many saints, and a device resorted to for the purpose of distinguishing between the real I or Self as the Adept understands it, and the physical body, erroneously termed I; the real Self can never be said to come and go, but the physical body, or son of a woman, does so.

(99) The 'wise and prudent' as the New Testament has it, is inadequately rendered.

(100) The Master or Adept often appears to his pupils in this manner.

(101) See *Aquarian Gospel.*

(102) *Ibid.*

(103) *Ibid.*

(104) *Ibid.*

(105) See Bernhard Pick, *Paralipomena,* p. 37.

(106) See *Gospel of the Holy Twelve.*

(107) See *Aquarian Gospel.*

(108) Without faith the performing of so called miracles were a useless expenditure of power on the part of an Adept, and would only be pandering to the love of the sensational, which so many unspiritual people possess. If faith is already present, a miracle would help to stimulate it, but if absent altogether, such a miracle would not awaken it.

(109) It is said in occult schools that Yoga brings liberation to the wise but bondage to fools. Jesus meant that the powers which initiation conferred, would be as dangerous as dynamite in the hands of children, if entrusted to those who were devoid of the higher altruism.

(110) The rest of this saying has been so erroneously translated in the Bible as to be almost void of meaning. The translators not being initiates, the words *psuche, pneuma* and *soma* have been denuded of their proper significances which are deeply occult and mystical.

(111) The word rendered *good* in the Bible means skilled. The true Teacher, or better called, Guru, is he who is skilled in leading his pupils to attainment. adjusting his teachings to suit their temperament and needs—hence the phrase ' gently leading those that are with young '. The teacher is also the door—*i.e.* to Initiation, and only those who enter by that door can safely attain. But those who try to acquire occult powers without a qualified teacher come to grief, and this is well known in all occult schools.

(112) *i.e.* that such a man is laying up for himself a terrible Karma.

(113) Fear, such as arises from the blasphemous notion of eternal damnation, for instance.

(114) *The Gospel of the Holy Twelve.*

(115) This statement is very full of meanings. A Master will never forget the genuine devotion of his disciple, which makes a link for hundreds of incarnations. Also Love is not of the transient, but of the eternal. Furthermore, Mary desires to profit by his teachings, and he or she whose foot is once firmly planted on the Path of Wisdom never turns back.

(116) This capacity to render oneself invisible is one of the powers of a Yogi or Adept. There is a document relating to the Comte de St Germain (of the French Revolution) showing how he made himself invisible when his life was attempted and so got away. Apollonius of Tyana did the same thing.

It is done by casting a glamour over the people, though there is also another method.

(117) This incident taken from *St John* is regarded by experts as an interpolation.

(118) It must be remembered that Orientals sat cross-legged on the ground.

(119) The idiomatic equivalent to the word woman in the original is lady or Madam ; woman being a term of respect and not of disrespect as in English. See *ante*.

(120) The expression ' He who sent me ' is based on the idea that the ' Father ' is the doer of all actions ; and is in entire accordance with the Yogi philosophy. As Baba Bharati says in the book entitled *Shree Krishna* : ' the belief that we ourselves are the doers of our actions subjects our Ego to their reactions. If by tracing the source of Karma to Krishna (*i.e.* the Father) we dispel this illusion from our mind, so that it may not disturb our conviction of the fact that Krishna is the only Doer, all our past and present Karma will leave us of themselves and go to Krishna to be absorbed by Him. While for the same reason the Karma-seeds springing from our present actions will be rendered germless like roasted seeds which never grow. Ignorance of occult philosophy on the part of the Church gave rise to the supposition that Jesus was an only son of God ; *i.e.*, they failed to understand the true meaning of such sayings.

(121) See *Aquarian Gospel*.

(122) *The Gospel of Eve* ; see Pick, *Paralipomena*, p. 30. This is pure advaita philosophy—viz. spiritual monism.

(123) That Jesus should preach mystic truths and remind her that " *he* was the resurrection and the life " at such a moment seems most unlikely, even though related by St John.

(124) This implies that the richer disciples contributed to the wants of the little band, and Judas was selected to carry the common purse.

(125) This is Shri Parananda's interpretation. It must be remembered that in those days, corpses were anointed with perfumes.

(126) For this discourse on woman, see *The Unknown Life of Christ*, by Notovitch (Indo-American Book Co.).

(127) Is this not a prediction of present conditions, *i.e.* the sweating system, and Trusts, which ruin the small tradesman ? And as to ' the wars and rumours of wars ' nothing need be said, for practically the whole world is at war (1917). According to Occult Cosmology, we are at present nearing the end of the 28th Divine Cycle and are living in the Iron or Dark Age called Kali Yuga.

(128) Many clairvoyants of high powers have good reason to believe that the advent of another great Teacher is at hand.

(129) There have been an endless number of such people during the last nineteen centuries, but even immediately following Jesus there were many. Jositheus for instance the ' Guru '

of Simon Magnus proclaimed himself to be the Christ and Messiah.

(130) Or as the Sanscrit Books maintain, go into Pralaya or latency, called the Night of Brahma.

(131) See *Aquarian Gospel.*

(132) See E. Shuré, *Jesus, The Last Great Initiate.*

(133) *Aquarian Gospel.*

(134) *Ibid.*

(135) *The Gospel of Nicodemus.*

(136) The superstition was that an angel invested this particular pool with healing properties. The incident has not been previously related in this story. See the Synoptics and *The Gospel of Nicodemus.*

(137) See Shri Parananda, *Eastern Exposition of St John,* p. 262.

(138) *Gospel of The Holy Twelve.*

(139) *Ibid.*

(140) *Ibid.*

(141) There are good reasons for believing that John was the only disciple who attained to Christhood, so the word ' beloved ' has probably a deeper significance than is usually implied.

(142) In *The Gospel of The Holy Twelve* we read this passage : ' And as they returned (from the scene of the Ascension) they missed Mary Magdalene and they looked for her and found her not. And some of the disciples said : " The Master hath taken her." '

(143) See *The Gospel of The Holy Twelve,* for this discourse which is adapted and paraphrased from pp. 116 and 160.

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